

GREAT GARDEN GIVE-AWAY

Free four-month membership of the Royal Horticultural Society

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A cautionary tale for Tony Blair

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'Royal college' plan to boost teachers

20p basic tax rate is set as Tory target

By Philip Webster, Political Editor

JOHN MAJOR will today promise to aim for a 20p basic rate of income tax within the next five years as part of a "formula for prosperity" to keep Britain booming.

It will be the first time that the Prime Minister has said when he hopes to achieve that goal, and he intends to contrast it to Labour's allegedly vague commitment to an eventual bottom rate of 10p.

Mr Major will also put the expansion of educational choice at the heart of his appeal to the country, promising to improve standards through a new "royal college" of teachers. That would be comparable to the Royal College of Nursing and have a similar remit of improving standards, discouraging militancy and enhancing the prestige of teaching as a profession.

The ideas will be outlined in the Conservatives' 22,000-word manifesto, which Mr Major will describe as the boldest and most far-reaching produced by any party for two decades. Other proposed measures include plans to force councils to sell homes that have been empty for more than a year, the privatisation of the London Underground, and the granting of greater commercial freedom to the Post Office. Mr Major will also promise to keep public spending below 40 per cent of the national income, to aim to eliminate public borrowing by the year 2000, and to ensure that Britain retains the lowest tax burden in Europe.

According to Tory sources

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the strong theme will be the extension of personal choice and security and the tax pledge. In particular, will please the Right. John Redwood said last night: "I want to see us aiming for a 20p rate in five years. We can do it and we should do it."

Mr Major will launch the manifesto encouraged by an opinion poll showing that Labour's lead has narrowed by four points, although he remains dogged by the sleaze

allegations surrounding the former minister Neil Hamilton. Yesterday he used his morning press conference to take all the questions the press could throw at him on the subject, defending Mr Hamilton's right to remain a candidate while he declared his innocence of the charges against him.

He also condemned the "witch-hunt mentality" being adopted, and attacked Tony Blair for suggesting that he would have sacked Mr Hamilton had he been a Labour MP.

But any hopes that the issue might die were dashed when the Liberal Democrats announced that they would join Labour in seeking a suitable anti-corruption candidate to stand against Mr Hamilton in Tatton. Names being floated in Westminster last night were Frances Lawrence, widow of the murdered London headmaster, and Judge Stephen Tumim. Mrs Lawrence made plain, however, that she was unwilling to be considered.

On the first day of the campaign proper, Paddy Ashdown sought to ridicule both Labour and the Tories by putting on a Punch and Judy show featuring Mr Blair as Punch and Mr Major as Judy. His serious message was a call for a return to real issues.

Last night's ICM poll in *The Guardian* gave Mr Major his first ray of hope for some time. Taken over the Easter weekend, it put Labour on 46 per cent, down two points, the Conservatives on 32 per cent, up two, and the Liberal Democrats on 17 per cent, up one.



On their buses: The Blairs and Majors began constituency campaigning yesterday when Labour and Tories rolled out their election coaches

Labour wants stars to aid new talent

By Jill Sherman, Chief Political Correspondent

POP GROUPS, leading actors and film stars will be given incentives to donate some of their royalties to a fund to sponsor talented youngsters under a plan to be revealed in Labour's manifesto tomorrow.

Labour is considering giving tax incentives to successful performers to encourage them to help gifted children. Pop stars such as Mick Hucknall of Simply Red and Annie Lennox would be encouraged to give part of their earnings to an endowment fund similar to the National Trust which would distribute the money to talented youngsters.

Special exhibitions and concerts could also be arranged with part of the

proceeds going to a proposed National Endowment for Science and the Arts, which would also be partly funded by the Lottery. "The arts, culture and sport are central to the task of recreating the sense of community, identity and civic pride that should define our country," the manifesto says. "Yet we consistently undervalue the role of the arts and culture in helping to create a civic society from amateur theatre to our art galleries."

Although financial incentives will not be detailed in the manifesto, a party source said that tax incentives were under active consideration. The manifesto argues that thousands of people are employed in the arts and culture, and many are significant earners for Britain, bringing in millions of tourists.

The manifesto also makes clear that, under a separate initiative, Labour would take a lead in promoting opportunities for sportsmen. "School sports must be the foundation. We will bring the Government's policy of forcing schools to sell off playing fields to an end," the document says.

It also pledges full backing for England's bid to host the 2006 World Cup, saying that a Labour government would "work to bring the Olympics and other major international sporting events to Britain".

A Labour spokesman said: "Labour is about prudence and responsibility, but that does not mean that it cannot have fun."

The manifesto also says that Labour would review the distribution of lottery funds to ensure that the maximum

number of people would benefit. It confirms that a Labour government would set up a new millennium commission that would support a range of education, environment and public health projects.

□ Tony Blair yesterday gave his clearest indication yet that a Labour government would not sign up to a single European currency if that would threaten Britain's interests (James Landale writes).

In a firm attempt to counter Tony claims that Labour is soft on Europe, the Labour leader emphasised his party's manifesto commitment to holding a referendum on a single currency. He also insisted that a Labour government would argue strongly against a single currency if the Maastricht criteria for membership were fudged.

Spacecraft is at the final frontier

The American space agency Nasa has pulled the plug on the spacecraft Pioneer 10, which was launched in March 1972 to explore Jupiter. The spacecraft is more than six billion miles away. Its signal is still being picked up but only one experiment is working and the cost is no longer justified. Page 6

Netanyahu puts blame on Egypt

The Israeli Prime Minister accused Egypt of fanning the flames of radicalism in the Middle East and of helping to push the peace process to its present crisis. Benjamin Netanyahu was referring to recent violence and the Arab League's determination to isolate Israel. Page 15

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Unfair sexism costs golf fair share of lottery cash

By Alexandra Freeman, Media Correspondent

GOLF clubs are missing out on millions of pounds in lottery grants because they refuse to admit women members, according to an unpublished Sports Council report.

The council has given out £427 million in some 2,000 lottery grants since 1995, but only 21 — worth a total of £3 million — have gone to golf. A further 70 applications from golf clubs have been refused, making it the only major sport to have more projects rejected than supported.

Peter Grant, who wrote the Sports Council report, said: "The lottery is potentially the greatest opportunity for club-based sport ... and, to date, golf is missing out."

The council will not give grants to clubs which discriminate against "a particular section of society", and many golf clubs restrict the

times that women may play, are run by men-only committees and have men-only bars. Often, women members do not have full voting rights.

The century-old York Golf Club was refused a £880,000 lottery grant last December largely because it bans women from playing on Saturdays or from sitting on the governing committee. Until last month, it also had a men-only bar.

Richard Braden, club secretary, said that the rules were backed by most of the women players, partly because they paid a much lower membership fee.

Lytham Green Drive Golf Club in Lancashire was also refused a £1 million grant towards the purchase of the freehold on its land because its membership rules discriminate against women. Newport Golf Club in South Wales,

however, agreed to remove the restrictions on women members to qualify for a £39,072 grant towards new practice greens and improved drainage and water supplies.

Terry Coates, chairman and chief executive of the Women's Professional Golfers' European Tour, said he was disappointed that so many clubs still held "old-fashioned" views when it came to equal opportunities. "It frustrates the development of women's amateur and professional game."

Freda Fairbank, now 92, who joined York Golf Club in 1916 and still plays twice a week, said yesterday: "Things are going along nicely as they are. I wouldn't like to see any changes ... they are a marvellous set of chaps who most times think the way that we do."

Thames craft are left high and dry

By Nick Nuttall, Environment Correspondent

BOATS on the Thames are at increasing risk of running aground after two years of record-breaking drought and a month of exceptionally dry weather.

Yesterday the Port of London Authority issued navigation notices restricting sailings between Kew and Teddington and urging boat users to take care at low tides. The low flows have led to the cancellation of boat trips up to Hampton Court over the past few days and more and more vessels have been grounded as the channels normally deep enough to take them dwindle away.

The news comes as the Institute of Hydrology, which monitors weather patterns, is to pronounce last month as having had half its expected rainfall. An official said yesterday that the figures were likely to show that the period from

March 1995 to last month was the driest two-year period since records began 200 to 230 years ago.

The conditions on the upper tidal reaches of the Thames are believed to be unprecedented for the time of year.

The Port of London Authority said that navigation notices had been issued last year but only at the end of the summer. "We normally only issue navigation notices like these at the end of a summer of drought. But we are looking here at a river in April. We are very concerned," an official said. The authority is seeking talks with the Environment Agency and Thames Water to see how flows can be boosted if the situation deteriorates further.

March is the end of the so-called recharge period when water companies expect reservoirs, rivers and underground

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Old Bill sets national pay scale for its prize snouts

By Stewart Tendler, Crime Correspondent

DETECTIVES are to fix a national pay scale for police informers in an attempt to bring proper accounting to the murky world of the snitch.

Tips will be valued using a points system agreed by all forces. Each point would be worth between £50 and £100, and informers could earn up to £3,000. Plans for the scale have been drawn up by a working party within the

Association of Chief Police Officers and will be put to a conference of 150 senior detectives this week. The system is expected to be tested in Kent and by the South-East Regional Crime Squad.

The conference will also discuss the progress of a secret national database of registered informers which is designed to prevent people being paid by more than one force for the same information. It will also include warnings about dangerous or manipulative informers. At the same time, a

code of practice is to be introduced to help the police to manage the growing numbers of child informers.

The ideas have been put forward as detectives are increasingly using informers to tackle crimes such as mugging and burglary and to break drug-trafficking gangs.

Under the plans, forces would award points according to a national code, with bonus points available for help in convicting a top "target" criminal or for a big drug haul. Extra money would

also be paid if an informer had put himself at risk.

Informers are now paid according to individual assessments of their worth. Normally a detective chief inspector authorises the cash, although a chief constable may step in when large amounts are being proposed.

Payments vary widely. The Audit Commission found during research in 1992 that the average police force fund for payments was £19,000 and the average award was £100.

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Prison ship wins go-ahead to take first inmates

By RICHARD FORD
HOME CORRESPONDENT

THE first inmates to be held on a prison ship since the Victorian age will board Her Majesty's Prison Weare at the end of the month after Labour endorsed planning approval for the vessel's onshore facilities.

Jack Straw backed the plan after being warned by the Prison Service that without emergency accommodation there was a danger of a "loss of control" in jails in England and Wales.

He was also told by Ann Widdecombe, the Prisons Minister, that last Tuesday the service only avoided locking out prisoners in the North West "by the narrowest of margins". The service has been busing inmates around the country in an increasingly desperate search to meet the

rise in prison numbers. Last week the jail population reached 59,710.

Mr Straw was briefed on the crisis because as the general election has been called, the Government needed Labour's approval for on-shore facilities to be erected near the mooring at Portland harbour in Dorset.

Richard Tilt, Director-General of the Prison Service, was called in to talk to the Shadow Home Secretary on the scale of the crisis facing the Prison Service. He warned Mr Straw of the threat of a breakdown in control in prisons unless extra places were found. Although the number of inmates in the 135 jails in England and Wales traditionally falls over Easter, the jail population is expected to start rising by 350 a week by the middle of the month.

Miss Widdecombe sought Mr Straw's support for a

visitors' centre and storage facilities. The local council had protested that the prison ship would hit the tourist industry. Technically, the council's efforts to resist the ship being moored at Portland were based largely on its objection to the construction of a five-metre high, razor-wire topped

fence on the harbour. The actual berthing of the ship fell outside planning legislation. However, after a planning inquiry, John Gummer, the Environment Secretary, backed the proposal. In his ruling, the DoE said: "The Secretary of State is satisfied that one of the least prominent

locations has been chosen and that the development will not appear out of place in a commercial, working port.

"The views of it from the main tourist areas and beaches, some two miles away, will be very limited."

In Miss Widdecombe's letter seeking Labour support,

said: "The need to have prison places is acute. The Prison Service is operating extremely close to its capacity limit."

She added that if the Prison Service was unable to place inmates on the Weare by the end of the month, the service would have to use police cells at a cost of £300 per prisoners

per night. Mr Straw wrote to Miss Widdecombe supporting the planning approval. He said that given Mr Tilt's warnings and "in the interests of public safety and prudent financial management" the ship should be used on a temporary basis.

However, he condemned the Government for allowing a population crisis to develop in the prison system. It had resulted in a desperate search for emergency accommodation at disused military bases in Yorkshire and a former Pontins holiday camp in Lancashire.

He said: "The Tories have let a scandalous situation develop. They have allowed the prison population to reach a record level without planning proper accommodation. It is so bad that the head of the Prison Service has warned of a risk of a 'loss of control' and

ministers are talking of using police cells."

He said Labour would help the government "clear up the mess" but demanded that the Home Office conduct a full audit of prison places and the demands being put on the service.

Up to 500 low-risk prisoners are to be held for up to three years aboard the Weare which is moored in Portland harbour after being bought by the Prison Service from £3.5 million.

The Weare was formally known as The Resolution. It was moored in the Hudson River near New York after being used until 1994 by the New York City Department of Corrections to hold medium-security prisoners. The Resolution provided dormitory accommodation on its five decks for soldiers after the Falklands conflict.

Shackled patient revives security dispute

A REMAND prisoner recovering from a lung transplant is shackled to a security guard in hospital (Richard Ford writes). The disclosure has reopened the row over the chaining of sick prisoners.

Wayne Brittle, 30, was taken from Doncaster private prison to North General Hospital in Sheffield after collapsing in the jail, where he was on remand facing robbery charges. He had a lung transplant last December and was remanded to Doncaster prison last

week accused of robbery involving £800. Mr Brittle, from Rotherham, south Yorkshire, has a handcuff on his left wrist, which is chained to a Group 4 security guard who sits at the end of the bed.

Last night Denis MacShane, Labour MP for Rotherham, called on the Home Secretary to intervene and order the remand prisoner to be unchained. He said: "The barbaric approach of Conservative ministers to sick people who have not been convicted of any crime is

unacceptable in the late twentieth century."

Mr Brittle is chained because of a risk assessment undertaken by Premier Prisons, the company running Doncaster jail. A spokesman for the jail said: "We did a risk assessment and the protection of the public is our top priority. We decided because of the seriousness of the charge, he should be under restraint."

A hospital spokesman said: "Our consultants at the moment do not feel that the restraint is impeding his care."

Disaster evidence not new, say police

By PAUL WILKINSON

CLAIMS of new evidence on the Hillsborough disaster were rejected yesterday by the police force that took much of the responsibility for the 1989 tragedy.

Ian Daines, the force's assistant chief constable, said that reports of a new video tape showing the crowd pens in the Sheffield Wednesday football stadium where 96 fans were fatally crushed only added "confusion to an already complex set of circumstances".

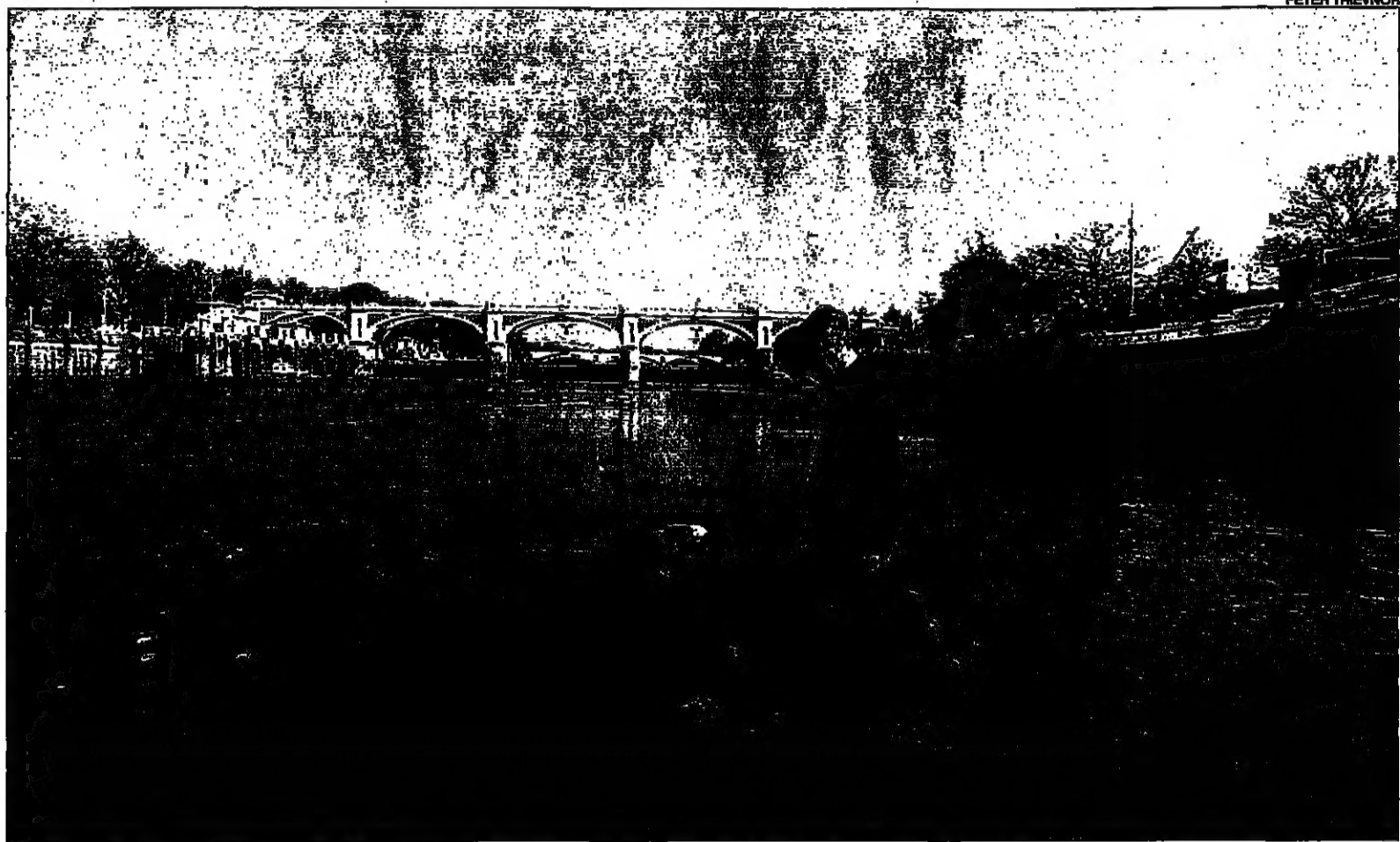
The support group set up by the families of the victims yesterday demanded a re-opening of the inquiry after viewing the video, said to have been shot by a surveillance camera monitoring the Leppings Lane end of the ground during the FA Cup semi-final.

South Yorkshire Police has always maintained that because of a malfunction its officers could not see that the pens were already full when they ordered gates to be opened.

The force told the inquiry by Lord Justice Taylor and the inquiry that because of a malfunction the pictures were of a "very poor quality", but according to a report published yesterday the video shows that the camera provided a clear enough picture for individuals to be picked out.

The video tape has lain in the archives of Yorkshire Television since it was given to the company by the police for use as part of a documentary.

The CPS said yesterday: "We are looking at the material. We have promised a response within 14 days."



Near Richmond Bridge parts of the Thames have become shallow enough to allow walking where once there was a navigation channel

Boats left high and dry

Continued from page 1 resources to be replenished before the spring. But winter rainfall has been 10 per cent of normal and underground sources that feed rivers are low in parts of the South and South East.

For vessels to navigate at low tide between Richmond and Kew without serious problems, 350 million gallons of water need to flow over Teddington Weir every day. In the present conditions of severe shortage, less than 100 million gallons are available.

At low tide, because of the low flows the levels are now about 19 inches below their normal levels for the time of year. It means that over some

stretches of the Thames, channels are now only about three feet deep.

"With rainfall being reported as well below average by the Meteorological Office for the past eight years and this January being the fourth driest on record, groundwater level are extremely low. This means less water will flow into the Thames and its tributaries," David Jeffery, the Port of London Authority chief executive, said.

John Collier, whose family run pleasure boats upstream from Westminster pier, said

that conditions on the river were undermining business. Yesterday Mr Collier, at the helm of the *Clifton Castle*, found it impossible to dock flush to Kew pier. Passengers had to be leapt ashore.

He blamed Thames Water for taking too much water for public supply and urged the Port of London Authority to start dredging in the upper tidal reaches. But the authority said that dredging was not the answer to raising water levels: the water would simply run into the valleys created by the dredging.

"But at the end of the day there is a need to maintain public water supply for the people of London," Dr Arkell said.

Away from the river, it emerged yesterday that many point-to-point racing events had become a farce as owners and riders began to withdraw horses because the ground was too hard.

Carl Evans, a member of the Point To Point Owners' and Riders' Association and the Times correspondent for the sport, said that at the East Kent meeting in Aldington there had been only ten runners for six races. Many meetings nowadays, he added, saw "walkovers", with only one horse entered.

Viewers give Five less than 3 per cent

Ratings for Channel 5, the new television station, plummeted on Monday, its second day of transmission, according to unofficial figures. The station captured only 2.7 per cent of the audience during peak hours of 7-10.30pm, compared to 5 per cent on opening night on Sunday (Alexandra Frean writes).

Its biggest audience of the night was 900,000 viewers for the feature film *Losing Chase*, starring Helen Mirren. Its flagship programme, the soap *Family Affairs*, had an audience of 300,000. As usual on a Bank Holiday, BBC1 had the lion's share of the audience with 45.5 per cent of viewers during peak time. A double issue of *EastEnders* was watched by 15.3 million, while its compilation of archive footage of celebrities before they attained fame reached 14.2 million. An audience of 12.7 million for *Coronation Street* helped push ITV's share to 32.7 per cent. BBC2 won 7.9 per cent of viewers and Channel 4 took 4.8 per cent.

Boy dies in fall on knife

A 12-year-old boy died after falling on a knife sticking out of an open dishwasher in the kitchen of his home, Mark Rockingham, from Kettering, Northamptonshire, tripped as he was reaching across the dishwasher to a cupboard. He fell onto the kitchen knife, severing an artery in his chest. His parents, David and Barbara, called paramedics but the boy died shortly after arriving at hospital on Easter Day. A date has yet to be fixed for an inquest.

Teenager's body found

The body of a teenager drowned at sea after giving up his lifejacket to save his father has been found nearly three months after he died. Paul Cyster, 18, was lost along with his brother David, 16, when their father Stephen's fishing boat capsized. The teenager's body was recovered last Friday near the Clifton suspension bridge, nine miles from the scene of the accident in the Bristol Channel. His brother's body was found ten days after the accident.

Camera clue to killer

Recordings by closed-circuit television cameras could disclose the identity of the killer of an aspiring poet beaten around the head and left in her blazing house. Cameras installed along the seaford from Brighton to Hove are thought to have recorded Deborah Thomas's last journey from a nightclub accompanied by an unknown man. Detailed results of a post-mortem examination on Miss Thomas, 37, who had two children, are being awaited.

Council's tribunal bill

A local authority is faced with a bill of up to £200,000 after being ordered by an industrial tribunal to re-employ a worker unfairly accused of irregularities. Liverpool City Council must take back Kevin Nolan, who was dismissed from his £24,000-a-year post with the council's building and maintenance division. In addition to back pay, Mr Nolan, 48, will receive a sum to compensate for the distress he has suffered. All allegations against him were dropped.

Kidnap mother ill

Mavis Mangan, 61, who met John Major in Downing Street last month to discuss ways of winning freedom for her son Keith, kidnapped by rebels in Kashmir in 1995, has suffered a heart attack. She has cancelled a trip to India this month, where she hoped to make a personal plea to the kidnappers. Mrs Mangan, from Middlesbrough, Teesside, was yesterday "quite comfortable" in South Cleveland Hospital, and may be allowed home in a few days.

Priest on theft charge

A Roman Catholic priest was yesterday charged with stealing more than £200,000 from church funds. Father Seamus Hetherington, 65, was released on conditional bail after appearing before Dartford magistrates on four theft charges. He originally faced one charge of allegedly stealing £17,350 from a Catholic Social Club in Swanley, Kent. He was later charged with three further offences of theft of funds from the Church of the Holy Apostles, Swanley.

Hotel on rails plan fails

Eurostar's £200 million plan to run luxury "hotels" on wheels between Britain's regional cities and Europe has been scrapped. More than 30 of the carriages, featuring bedrooms and reclining seats, have been delivered. But doubts about demand and the inability of the Eurostar engines to supply enough power for washing facilities and lavatories have indefinitely postponed the plan. If all the toilets were flushed at once the train would come to a halt.

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The fast-track chief constable takes over

By STEWART TENDLER, CRIME CORRESPONDENT

BEFORE joining the Metropolitan Police at the age of 20, Elizabeth Neville's experiences of the law were limited to being stopped for riding her bicycle without lights as an undergraduate at St Hilda's in Oxford, where she read philosophy and psychology.

Yesterday she took over the reins of the 1,800-strong Wiltshire force as Britain's second woman chief constable. Wiltshire is one of the largest force areas in England and covers Stonehenge, the Salisbury Plain and the industrial town of Swindon.

An inspector in her mid-twenties, Miss Neville, the daughter of a civil engineer and an educational psychologist, was recruited under a graduate fast-track scheme. She became a superintendent at 33 and beat 20 men to become assistant chief constable of Sussex five years later. In 1995 she became the most senior operational woman commander as deputy chief constable of Northamptonshire.

Miss Neville still bristles at the biographies and newspaper profiles that have fanned on the fact that she is a

divorced mother of two: she has a son Michael and a daughter Katherine by her marriage to another police officer. She likes to point out that no one ever talks about male officers in the same terms.

She says she has always had support from her male colleagues during her career and never experienced sexism in a highly male-dominated profession. Only once, 13 years ago after the birth of her first child, did anybody question her return to work.



Neville will head one of largest force areas

Top black officer in race claim

By RUSSELL JENKINS

THE most senior black policeman in Britain's second largest force claimed yesterday that he was repeatedly passed over for promotion in favour of women and white officers because of his colour.

Chief Inspector Martin Harding, 39, from Rochdale, Greater Manchester, told an industrial tribunal hearing that he was denied advancement in Greater Manchester Police because he was a man and of "African origin". The officer, who is claiming racial and sexual discrimination, said he was accepted as a candidate for promotion to chief inspector in July 1992 and was told it could be 18 months before he was made up. However, he was not promoted until March 1996.

Mr Harding, a father of two, said: "Four other officers passed the board on the same day. All were white and one was a woman. Three gained substantive or temporary positions within six months."

Greater Manchester Police strongly deny the allegations and have said that they will fiercely contest the action.

Moby may live on as a museum piece

By SHIRLEY ENGLISH

THE skeleton of Moby, the 50ft sperm whale that died on the mudflats of the Forth on Easter Monday, could become an exhibit in the National Museums of Scotland in Edinburgh.

Curators have been given permission to recover the bones of the 40 tonne mammal after an autopsy by a Department of Environment pathologist.

Yesterday the Receiver of Wrecks

accepted responsibility for disposing of the whale, which is Crown property, having beached below the high water mark. Moby's remains will be buried in a landfill site near Grangemouth. Falkirk Council has agreed to assist.

Dr Keith Todd, curator at North Queensferry's Deep Sea World, and Eric Crombie, the centre's diver, spent the night with Moby to ensure that people did not try to take his teeth for souvenirs.

This morning, a tug will pull the dead

whale off the soft mudbank at high tide and be taken to a jetty at South Alloa, where attempts will be made to lift him by crane onto an articulated lorry. The whale will then be taken to the council landfill site.

The cost of Moby's disposal, estimated at around £3,000, will be met by the Receiver of Wrecks and there may be a donation from the National Museums, if it manages to raise the £5,000 needed to remove the skeleton.

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Princess accuses photographer of harassment

By Stephen Farrell

DIANA, Princess of Wales, yesterday accused a paparazzi photographer of harassing her after she asked a passer-by to help and stood by as he removed the film.

The Princess issued a statement justifying her action in response to police criticism of her role in the incident outside an exclusive west London gym. Her rescuer was a Gaelic football player who makes a living as an hotel tour.

A tabloid newspaper yesterday published pictures of Kevin Duggan, 28, from West Belfast, forcing award-winning royal photographer Brendan Beirne against a wall and putting him in an armlock.

Police said there would be no action because Mr Beirne did not make a complaint. However senior officers were furious and said it demonstrated that the Princess needed her full-time police protection to be restored. "Apart from anything else an alleged assault took place and a theft," said one source.

The Princess responded by issuing a statement from her office saying she had found the photographer's actions distressing. "Once again the Princess of Wales has been harassed by a photographer. Once again this has become the subject of inaccurate press comment," the statement said.

"The Princess hopes that the recently passed Protection from Harassment Act will give greater protection to people such as herself who are the victims of this kind of distressing intrusion into their private lives."

Mr Beirne, 39, said he took the pictures from 50ft away as the Princess left the gym on Monday morning, and was astonished when she ran across the road, demanded the

film and then summoned help.

"I am stunned she did not step in and stop it. It was outrageous. She knows I am not a stalker or a threat. I have taken photographs of her for ten years," he said.

"It will certainly make me think twice about taking that sort of picture again, not if it's a big news situation, but in that sort of circumstances."

Mr Duggan was last night with reporters from *The Sun* newspaper which has bought his story. He is reported to have claimed he had no idea who he was helping.

"I thought it was a Di lookalike at first but I would have done the same for any woman. It's a question of manners. My mum brought me up to be a gentleman."

However, his account was greeted with scepticism. Alan Robertson, a fellow tour who works at Earl's Court Underground station earning £3 commission for every tourist persuaded to sign at the budget Chelsea Hotel near by, said: "In some ways it's not surprising because he's quick-tempered, he does things like that. He's had arguments in pubs. He knew it was Princess Diana and he may have done it for the publicity."

Mr Robertson added: "He said, 'Alan, I've just grabbed a photographer, and put his arm up his back, and taken the camera off him, and given it to Lady Di, and Di says, don't worry, the police won't bother you'."

Justin Andrews, 23, manager of the Chelsea Hotel, said: "Kevin's quite a pleasant guy. He works on and off, stays here most of the time. He's quite a gentleman, and I approve of what he has done."

"Di asked for him to grab the camera," he had not

heard from Mr Duggan since the incident happened. "I think he's just enjoying it," he said.

Hotel security guard Alan Wayne, 27, said: "He's a nice guy, he'll always help someone out. He's a real ladies' man."

Kelvin Bruce, the freelance photographer who witnessed the scene and sold his pictures for around £8,000, said: "He knew full well it was the Princess. She was standing there talking to a photographer. She's not easily mistaken."

Legal sources last night indicated that the Princess would be unlikely to win a prosecution in such circumstances under the Protection from Harassment Bill 1997, which received Royal Assent last month but which will not come into force until after the general election.

The legislation is intended to protect victims from stalkers and nuisance neighbours. It creates two new crimes, the most serious carrying a maximum five year jail sentence and unlimited fine.

However for an offence to be committed the behaviour must have occurred more than once and it allows the alleged offender to claim his course of conduct was reasonable in the particular circumstances.

In August last year the Princess won a High Court injunction against the freelance photographer Martin Stenning, 36, banning him from going within 300 yards of her. She complained that Stenning made her life a misery by following her everywhere on his Suzuki motorcycle and resorted to taking his helmet and keys.

Brendan Beirne was the 1995 Nikon Royal Photographer of the Year.



The Princess looks on as Brendan Beirne is held in an armlock by Kevin Duggan

Father finds his daughter dead in road crash

By Lin Jenkins

A POLICE inspector wept openly yesterday as he told of going to the scene of a fatal car crash near his home and finding that his daughter had been killed.

Chief Inspector Tim Yeoman said he went out in the car with his other daughter to look for Charis when she and her boyfriend were late for a family meal at Easter.

They came across people leaning over a footbridge to look at an accident. "Like all fathers I hoped it was not my child, that they were one of the ones in the queue. But it wasn't, it was my daughter."

Miss Yeoman, a 20-year-old student nurse, was on her way to her parents' home in Tiverton, Devon, when her car was hit by another which careened into her path from the other side of a dual-carriageway. Her boyfriend, Jason Jago, broke his arm in the crash and suffered lacerations.

Stephen Pengelly, from Tiverton, the driver of the other car, was described as being in a serious condition with multiple injuries in the Royal Devon and Exeter Hospital yesterday, where he was flown by air ambulance.

Mr Yeoman, who works at Devon and Cornwall Police headquarters near Exeter, said he could not express the depth of his grief. "She was a lovely daughter. Now my other daughter, Nicola, has no sister. Her boyfriend has no girlfriend."

She and Mr Jago, a university student, were planning to marry next year after she had qualified. "They were made for each other. This is an absolute and total tragedy," Mr Yeoman said. Nicola Yeoman is a nurse at the Bristol Royal Hospital for Sick Children.

Of the crash, he said: "I just want it to be known that if crash barriers had been erected along that dual-carriage-



Charis Yeoman: she was planning to marry



Tim Yeoman: he called for crash barriers

way this tragedy may never have happened." He said there had been two fatal accidents on the road in two years. "One fatal is one too many. I really do feel that this is now three too many."

Assistant Chief Constable John Albon said traffic had been heavy over the holiday. "It is every father's worst nightmare to drive out and look for his daughter and to come across that carnage."

He said that had the accident been further along the road, she would have survived as there were crash barriers there.

Police are appealing for witnesses to the crash, which happened at 6pm on Monday evening, halfway between the A361 junction with the M5 and the Bolham junction.

Archers villain prompts farmyard slip by Ford

By Bill Frost

MANY Radio 4 listeners rang the BBC yesterday to complain at Anna Ford's use of a vulgar term of abuse during the *Today* programme.

The presenter, who later apologised for the slip, described Simon Pemberton, heartless and grasping villain of Radio 4's *The Archers*, as "rather a shit" for trying to evict his tenants, the Grundys, from their farm. Although several fans of the radio serial telephoned to support Ms Ford's blunt verdict on the so-called Borchester Bounder, about 40 callers expressed anger at her gaffe.

The BBC switchboard got its first call shortly after 8.25am when Ms Ford was discussing Pemberton's attempt to banish the Grundys from their home with spokesmen from the Country Landowners' Association and the Tenant Farmers' Association.

The Borchester Bounder "does seem rather a shit, he's a bit ruthless, shouldn't he be counselled?", she suggested.

Ms Ford, 53, came out of the studio at the end of the programme to face a "mild dressing down" from production staff for "letting her heart rule her head", according to one insider.

The broadcaster, who probably spoke for a legion of Radio 4 listeners who back the beleaguered Grundys against their cruel landlord, said: "I realise it was an unfortunate slip of the tongue."

A BBC spokesman said: "We had a number of complaints. I think a lot came from non-metropolitan listeners who are not used to hearing this sort of language. It is the sort of thing that can happen on live radio." Jon Barton, Editor of *Today*, also expressed regret. "This is a long,

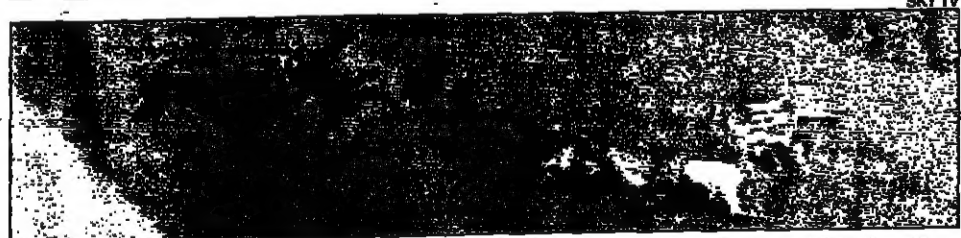
live programme and occasionally things do slip out."

Pemberton — played by Peter Wingfield — carved an unenviable reputation for greed, coldness and politically incorrect attitudes towards women and social inferiors even before issuing the Grundys with a notice to quit. Mr Wingfield was in Canada filming an episode of the science fiction series *Highlander*.

A spokeswoman for his agents, said: "He may be unpopular in this country as Simon Pemberton but he has lots of admirers abroad for the role in *Highlander*. There are Peter Wingfield fan clubs in Canada and France."

Peter Tewkesbury, a long-time listener, acknowledged that the line between art and reality had been blurred by Simon Pemberton's arrival.

Leading article, page 21



Formidable Flame bucking its way through the spectators' enclosure at Southwell

Bolting racehorse knocks baby out of his pram

By Tim Jones

A BABY escaped unhurt yesterday after a runaway racehorse kicked over his pram as it bolted through a crowd of spectators.

Lee Marshall, aged two months, was knocked to the ground when the animal bucked and hit the side of his pushchair with its hooves as it ran wild through the spectators' enclosure at Southwell, Nottinghamshire.

Thousands of television viewers saw the incident as the horse Formidable Flame, unseated its jockey, burst out of the starting stalls and smashed through the rails into the crowd.

The child was being looked after by his grandmother, Margaret Marshall, when the horse panicked just before it was due to run in the 3 o'clock race. Mrs Marshall said: "It was terrifying. People were

screaming and scattering as the loose horse came towards me. It was bucking and lashing out and it swept past and bowled me and the baby in the pushchair over."

Paul Marshall, Lee's father, said: "It knocked me over and gave me a bang on the leg but I was not hurt. Then I saw the



Lee Marshall in safe hands after the incident

pushchair and the baby on the ground. Thank God he has not been hurt."

Mr Marshall, a joiner from Normanton, Derbyshire, said: "Me and my mother had one hand each on the pushchair when the horse came smashing through the fencing and made straight for us. The horse looked massive and I was still looking at it when it was only three or four feet away. We were just frozen with fear."

"I saw its hoof go straight into the pram but then I was knocked over and for a moment I lost sight of the baby. But then I picked him up and his face was a bit red from where he had landed on it but apart from that he was perfectly OK."

Lee was taken to hospital for checks, but was released soon afterwards.

Racing, page 15

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Teaching unions back refusal to take unruly pupils

By JOHN O'LEARY AND DAVID CHARTER

TEACHERS launched a concerted attempt yesterday to stem the growing level of violence in schools as the two biggest classroom unions threatened not to teach the most disruptive pupils.

For the first time, delegates at the National Union of Teachers' annual conference voted to support members refusing to teach pupils who present an "unacceptable safety risk". The move put the union in line with the rival National Association of Schoolmasters and Union of Women Teachers, which yesterday said that schools could easily expel 100,000 children a year, eight times the current figure, if they were strict about dealing with serious disruption.

However, the two unions adopt different solutions. The NASUWT blames the integration of disruptive pupils into mainstream schools ill-equipped to deal with them, and wants more special schools and referral units. The NUT supports "inclusive education" and demands that schools be given more money to cope with pupils with special needs.

In a passionate debate at the NUT conference in Harrogate, many delegates were reluctant to countenance exclusion, despite several ac-

counts of violent incidents. A five-year-old was said to have given a teacher a black eye, while in other schools pupils had hurled chairs at teachers and vandalised their cars.

Richard Rieser, from Hackney, in east London, said children were being demonised by the press. "There is an unwillingness to accept that children don't just hit people because they don't like them. Something has happened to those children in society."

The conference backed a resolution expressing concern at the rising level of exclusions and blaming underfunding, wider problems in society and persistent denigration of teachers by the Government and media. It also blamed league tables for encouraging schools to rid themselves of low-achievers.

Delegates also agreed that members should be balloted on a refusal to teach pupils who presented an "unacceptable safety risk", especially when a head teacher's decision to exclude a pupil was overturned.

The NASUWT annual conference in Bournemouth called yesterday for more special schools and pupil referral units, dubbed "sin bins", to take troublemakers. Nigel de Gruchy, general secretary, said: "If schools were strict

and excluded all youngsters who swore or threatened violence against their pupils or teachers, they would easily exclude 100,000 a year."

Dave Batty, union secretary in Sheffield, said a female teacher suffered a broken knee, black eye, kicked shin and a punch in the back from one disruptive pupil in a single term. He added: "The parent believes she is a perfect parent because she gives him everything he wants. If they go to the shops and he sees something he wants, he gets it. We need to define what good parents are."

The NASUWT also called for the scrapping of independent appeals panels which send pupils back to school after both the head and governors agree to expel them.

Left-wing teachers in the NUT were warned not to challenge a new government. Mr McAvoy told delegates in his closing address that the 190,000 members would not back industrial action of the type threatened during three days of debate.

"There can be no national disruption, no confrontation with a new government, without a majority vote in favour of that action," he said.

Anticipating a Labour government, he said he expected it to consult the NUT on policy.



Nigel Turner told colleagues that some pupils would never reach national norms

Darrens and Deans are 'born to fail at school'

By DAVID CHARTER
EDUCATION CORRESPONDENT

CHILDREN from inner-city backgrounds are born to fail, a comprehensive school teacher told colleagues at a union conference yesterday.

The "Darrens, Deans and Damians" had no chance of reaching national norms of achievement, Nigel Turner, a geography teacher in Nottingham, told the National Association of Schoolmasters and Union of Women Teachers.

Mr Turner embarrassed his union's leadership by saying that no amount of extra cash could significantly improve standards for some pupils. He also attacked Ofsted, the

school inspectorate, for expecting too much from inner-city children. His broadside came as Nigel de Gruchy, general secretary of the union, called on teachers to be less hostile towards Ofsted and accept that inspectors could play a positive role.

Mr Turner's school will be inspected later this month and he said he could write his inspection report now: "The standards of achievement reached by the pupils are well below the national norms."

He added: "You could give our school all the resourcing, staffing, technology and inspirational teachers in the world for years and our kids would never meet the nat-

ional norms. I'm afraid that Darren, Dean, Damian, Liam and Nathan can't do it, never will do it, and frankly would not give a damn if they don't do it at all."

Mr Turner refused to confirm that his school was William Crane, a comprehensive lying 83rd out of 85 in the Nottinghamshire GCSE table, where 8 per cent of children achieve five passes at grades A to C.

Mr de Gruchy refused to be drawn into debate about Mr Turner's speech. Asked whether children could be identified as failures by their names, he commented: "I would not have put that interpretation upon it."

'Rat Boy' given four years for toby jug theft

By PAUL WILKINSON

A TEENAGE criminal whose activities earned him the sobriquet Rat Boy was identified publicly yesterday.

Anthony Kennedy was sentenced to four years at a young offenders' institution by Newcastle Crown Court after admitting two burglaries. Judge Harkins did not make an order banning his identification, which he had been entitled to do under the Children and Young Persons Act.

Kennedy, now 17, won his nickname in 1993 from his method of eluding police by living in the service ducts of the Byker Wall housing complex in Newcastle upon Tyne. He stole, often from elderly residents, to feed his addiction to tranquillisers.

Yesterday the court was told that he broke into the home of an 84-year-old man in Byker and stole a toby jug. When arrested he said he could not remember the break-in because he had taken between 30 and 50 Valium pills. He had hurled the jug at a police officer, leaving him with a cut face and black eyes.

In the other burglary, Kennedy had had a young accomplice, Brian Forster, for the defence. "He is a very young boy who has become hopelessly addicted to Valium."

The judge told him: "You have to be locked up for a long time to protect the public. I accept what is said in reports, that you desperately want your life to be different, but



Kennedy: addicted to tranquillisers

you are persistently involved in serious crime."

Kennedy had escaped from youth custody, including specialist secure units, on at least 37 occasions.

Chief Inspector Michael Hassen said after the hearing: "To give a four-year sentence to a 17-year-old is a bold statement. It shows young people that if you commit crimes you can expect a severe sentence. He was only last released on December 13 and between that date and the end of January he was arrested four times for matters including burglary, drugs and assault."

"You reap what you sow. He has been in custody a number of times and is still a persistent offender."



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New hope in liver cancer treatment

By JEREMY LAURANCE, HEALTH CORRESPONDENT

A METHOD of delivering anti-cancer drugs directly to the liver could save 1,000 deaths from bowel cancer a year, researchers said yesterday.

The liver is the most common site of spread in bowel cancer. Scientists from the Imperial Cancer Research Fund studied 4,000 patients who had drugs infused directly into the blood supply to their liver and found that survival was increased by 5 per cent.

Richard Gray, one of the team from the fund's cancer studies unit in Oxford, said: "Even if this treatment were only moderately effective, it could prevent about 1,000 deaths a year in the UK and more than 10,000 worldwide."

The charity's researchers are now undertaking the biggest study of cancer treatment in China to confirm the results. Bowel cancer is the third most common cancer in Britain, with about 31,500 new cases a year. It is the second highest cause of cancer deaths.

Scientists in Ohio have made the first artificial human chromosomes, which could eventually offer a cure for

inherited diseases (Bronwen Maddox writes). Researchers at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland and Athersys, the team's company that owns the rights to the new technology, report in *Nature Genetics* that they have made a miniature human chromosome which can replicate in the same way as natural chromosomes.

The artificial chromosome might offer a way of transporting a new gene into a cell to correct a genetic defect. It could help to cure inherited diseases such as cystic fibrosis and possibly some forms of cancer.

Huntington Willard, senior author of the study, said yesterday that the significance of the work was that "it gives us a fresh approach to gene therapy. People have been so frustrated by gene therapy, which has not lived up to the hype."

In the past, gene therapy has generally relied on viruses to deliver genes into a cell's chromosomes, but that has proved to be a hit-and-miss approach, and also carries the risk of causing genetic damage.

Battle site holds off advancing builders

By ALAN HAMILTON

GUARDIANS of the battlefield of Tewkesbury have won a temporary reprieve in their fight to preserve one of the most important sites of the Wars of the Roses from the encroachment of housing.

Councillors in the Gloucestershire town, where in 1471 the Lancastrian hopes of restoring Henry VI to the throne ended in bloody slaughter at the hands of the Yorkist Edward IV, yesterday agreed to defer a decision on whether to allow the building of 62 homes on Gastons Field, the site of the encounter. The borough council's full planning committee will inspect the site before meeting again on May 6.

Objections to the application by the developer, Bryant Homes Merica, have come from opponents as diverse as English Heritage, which lists it as an important historical site, and the Richard III Foundation of New Jersey. Planning officials in Tewkesbury have told councillors that there is no legal reason for the application to be refused.

Hormone spray can help to keep children dry at night

THE widely held opinion that childhood enuresis, or bed-wetting, is the result of psychological upset may be mistaken, recent research has suggested.

Careful investigations have failed to show any correlation between bed-wetting in children and such upsetting events as going to new schools, moving house, parental, financial or marital disasters, or even adoption.

The joint report in the *British Journal of Clinical Practice* by child psychiatrists from six Italian universities suggests that the high incidence of behavioural problems exhibited by children who wet their beds are the result of their enuresis, not the cause.

Shame of what the child regards as continuing infantile behaviour and fear of punishment are often increased by a lack of understanding from parents. Those fears may prolong or exacerbate the enuresis.

The Italian doctors have been comparing two different pharmacological approaches to bed-wetting. The use of a small dose of a mild tricyclic antidepressant taken by mouth has been compared with the effect of using desmopressin, an artificially produced anti-diuretic hormone which is absorbed through the nose with the help of a nasal puffer.

Danish research workers demonstrated between 1985 and 1990 that enuretic child-



ren did not produce so much of the natural anti-diuretic hormone, which controls urine flow, at night as did those children who became dry at a normal age.

The tricyclic antidepressants are effective in the treatment of enuresis not so much because they improve a child's mood, but because they alter its sleep pattern and

affect the response of the muscles of the bladder.

The trial showed that there was a significant decrease in the number of wet beds when either treatment was used. But it was greater with the intranasal hormone.

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SATURDAY
IN THE TIMES

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Pioneer spacecraft boldly goes to the final frontier

By Nigel Hawkes
SCIENCE EDITOR

THE American space agency Nasa has pulled the plug on its most distant emissary, the spacecraft Pioneer 10.

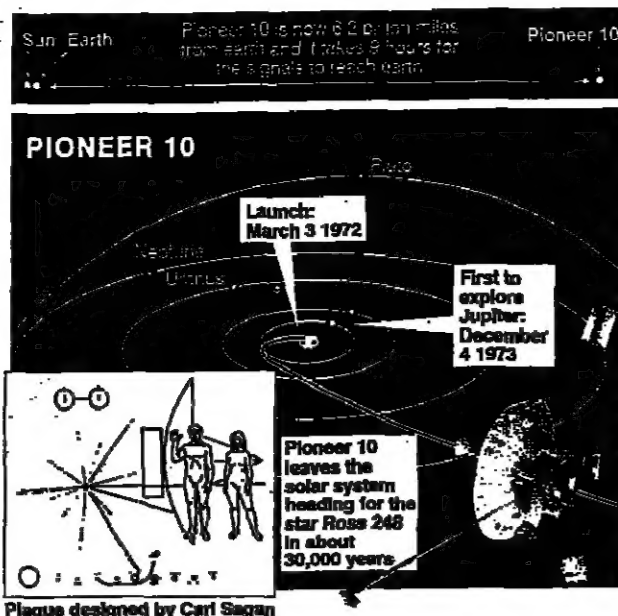
Launched in March 1972 to explore Jupiter, Pioneer 10 became the first spacecraft to fly beyond Mars and the first to be placed on a trajectory to escape from the solar system. Now more than six billion miles away, Pioneer 10 has long since left its original mission behind. But until Monday evening, its signal — a mere 2.5 billionths of a trillionth of a watt by the time it reaches Earth — was still being picked up by Nasa.

With only one experiment still working and its power supply dwindling, Pioneer 10 no longer justifies the cost of keeping in touch. Nasa will save several million dollars a year by leaving the spacecraft to drift unaided into the dark.

The last signal was received at 8.45pm on Monday via a 230ft dish near Madrid, part of Nasa's Deep Space Network. The signal had taken more than nine hours to travel from the spacecraft, at a speed of 186,000 miles per second.

Larry Lasher, the project manager, said it was an emotional moment for some of the controllers. "Some of them have been on this mission for 20 years and this is their last day," Dr Lasher said. "It was quite traumatic, quite a loss for those people."

Like its sister Pioneer 11, which went silent in 1995, Pioneer 10 is powered by heat



Plaque designed by Carl Sagan

from radioactive pellets which generate electricity. Today there is enough power only for the onboard computer, the antenna and its one remaining experiment.

But James Van Allen, of the University of Iowa, the space scientist responsible for that experiment, believes that it can still provide useful information about the heliopause, the point at which the influence of the Sun finally peters out.

When Pioneer 10 was launched, he said, that was thought to be barely beyond the orbit of Jupiter. In fact, the spacecraft has already gone ten times further, but has yet to reach it. "The most credible estimate is that it lies at least 120 astronomical units away,"

Professor Van Allen said. One astronomical unit is the distance between the Earth and the Sun.

At present Pioneer 10 is 67 astronomical units (6.2 billion miles) away from Earth, so, if Professor Van Allen is right, it will have fallen silent long before it reaches the heliopause in 40 years or so. After that, the only landmark in sight is the star Ross 248 in the constellation of Andromeda, which Pioneer 10 will reach in about 30,000 years.

Despite Nasa's decision to stop tracking Pioneer 10, Professor Van Allen still hopes to get some data back. Dr Lasher has arranged for it to be used as a target for people learning to track objects deep in space, so its signals will be detected

from time to time without additional expense. Until it finally dies, towards the end of this year or some time next, some data may continue to be gathered.

Even when both Pioneers are dead, data from interstellar space will continue to come from the better-equipped Voyager 1 and Voyager 2 spacecraft, which should have enough power to keep going until about 2020, assuming that Nasa's budget remains intact.

Pioneer 10 took the first close-up photographs of Jupiter and its moons, discovered intense zones of radiation around the giant planet and measured its magnetic field. It proved that the asteroid belt was not as destructive a minefield as had once been feared, and it paved the way for later, more sophisticated probes.

Pioneer 10 also carries a plaque designed by the astronomer Carl Sagan, in case it should ever fall into the hands of another civilisation. The gold-plated plaque contains diagrams of a man and a woman, and a celestial map in an effort to help aliens to work out where the spacecraft originated.

However, Professor Van Allen called the plaque "a whimsical touch" and said that the chances of it being found were slim. "The chances of it ever being recovered by any intelligent civilisation that will sit down with a magnifying glass and try to decide it are very remote, I think. That's a mild way of putting it."



Malcolm MacDonald arriving at court yesterday

Alcoholic football star gets road ban

By PAUL WILKINSON

THE former soccer star Malcolm MacDonald was banned from driving for two years yesterday after being three times over the legal limit.

The former England, Newcastle United and Arsenal player, 47, told magistrates that he had turned to drink after his career ended at the age of 29 when he developed osteoarthritis in his knees. He said that he drank up to a bottle of whisky a day to deaden the pain.

The offence took place in February when MacDonald was on his way home after hosting his hour-long football phone-in on Century Radio in Gateshead. MacDonald, who on March 11 had pleaded guilty to drink-driving, arrived at Newcastle upon Tyne Magistrates' Court yesterday with his girlfriend Carol Johnson, 45, the former wife of Brian Johnson, lead singer with rock band AC/DC. He also received an 18-month probation order and was told to pay £40 costs.

MacDonald, of Jesmond, Tyne and Wear, is seeking help for his alcohol problem with the North East branch of the charity Turning Point. Peter Lough, the group's manager, told the court: "He is over the first couple of hur-



"Supermac" in his heyday at Newcastle

dies. The easy bit is getting off the drink with medication and support. The hard part is staying off. If Malcolm can sustain his sobriety he can be a great help to us and have input in our five-a-side teams."

MacDonald's radio show has been taken over by other North East soccer stars. Century Radio said that a decision on MacDonald would be made at the next management meeting but the chances of his returning to the show were "not hopeful".

Youths risk lives again on death crash track

A train driver narrowly avoided hitting a group of up to ten children playing on a railway line at Leeds where two teenagers had been killed just 24 hours earlier. Railtrack said it was appalled that the children — some as young as five — continued to trespass on the stretch of track where the two boys had died on Sunday.

Police named the dead boys, both from Leeds, as Mark Ashcroft, 13, of Hutton Moor, and Ricky Smith, 15, of Hutton. They were struck by a train from Middlesbrough to Manchester airport at 9.30pm, shortly after police were alerted that youths had been seen throwing stones at trains. Another teenager with their escaped injury.

Forest in Europe

A group of Nottingham Forest fans who were arrested before a match in Munich last year and spent three weeks in jail are taking claims of wrongful arrest to the European Court of Human Rights. Cases against all 11 were dropped.

Moorland fire

A fire, thought to have been caused by controlled burning that got out of hand, swept 500 acres of moorland at Banchory in Deeside, engulfing parts of the Hill of Fare and damaging nesting sites of grouse, meadow pipits and curlews.

Head accused

A primary school head has been suspended after allegations that he smacked two pupils. Police interviewed Kevin Crabb from Wavne Primary School, near Hull, after the mother of a 9-year-old boy made a complaint.

Glass attack

An off-duty Cambridge police woman was struck in the face with a broken glass in an attack outside a pub at Weymouth, Dorset, on Monday night. She has had to have stitches. Five people, including a woman, have been arrested.

Ding gone

London's town crier has had his 17lb handbell stolen. Peter Moore, 53, last saw the 12in copper and brass bell on Monday afternoon when he put it down to chat to tourists who were visiting Tower Hill Pageant.

Selling bee

Bee Health, of Scarborough, North Yorkshire, has won a £16 million deal to supply a natural remedy to Japan. The company is the world's largest refiner of propolis, manufactured by bees to protect their hives from infection.

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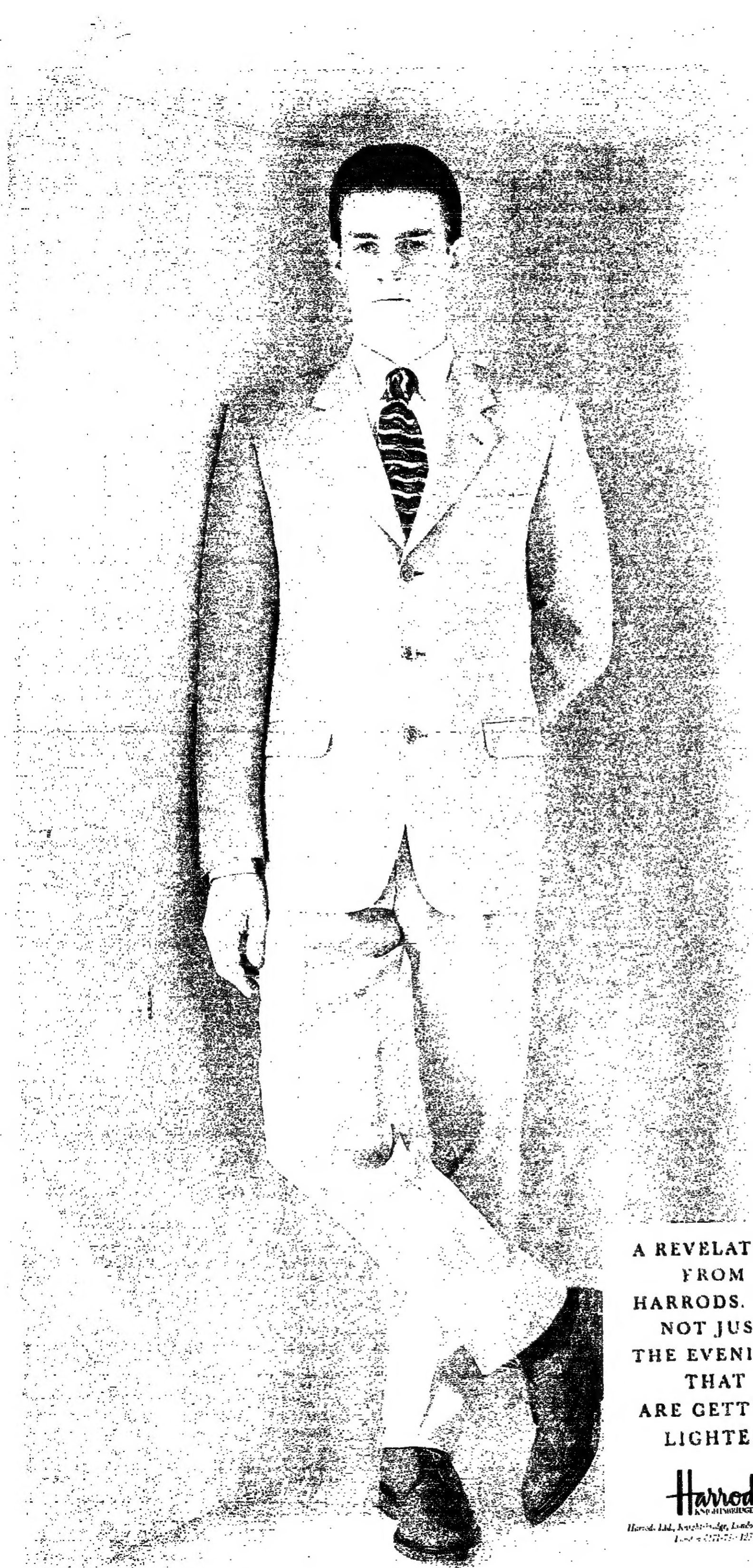
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ELECTION 97

All aboard the Labour campaign mystery tour

BLAIR'S BUS

BY BEN MACINTYRE

TONY BLAIR'S campaign rolled into the heart of England yesterday on its bus which, kicking off the first day of official campaigning with a flurry of high technology and old-fashioned baby-kissing.

The sleek, grey Blair bus is a vehicle more used to roving around the country with the likes of the pop group Simply Red. For the not-so-simply-red anymore Labour Party it has been equipped with a dozen telephone lines, a fully computerised mobile office, black carpets, a well-stocked fridge and a curtained salon in the back with a horseshoe shaped banquet where Mr Blair will give interviews en route.

The vehicle on which he will be living for much of the next month is not your average mobile home. On board yesterday were a brace of armed Special Branch officers, the official party photographer, a fax machine, television, video and a posse of Mr Blair's closest media advisers.

Nothing can be seen behind the black-tinted glass save wraith-like, Mandelsonian shadows, energetically flitting back and forth.

After so long waiting for this moment, the Labour team was leaving nothing to chance, from the complimentary croissants for the assembled journalists in the two other buses trailing behind "Into the future with Tony Blair" to the Union Jack painted on the roof of the Blair bus, presumably to entice any low flying or otherwise floating voters.

Pop stars specialise in producing the unexpected. Mr Blair is concentrating on avoiding just that, and any hint of complacency. As his driver, Chris Cox observed, taking Mr Blair and his troops around is "definitely easier than nannying Deep Purple."

The watchwords of the Blair campaign are the three Rs: to Reassure voters of the Tory record, Reassure them that Labour is safe, and spell out the Rewards of a future Labour government. To this might be added Restraining the accompanying press and Risk avoidance. Even the smallest error evokes dark looks, as when the almond croissants



The Blairs on the stump in Northampton yesterday after the party leaders unveiled their campaign "battle buses". Mr Major's first stop was at a DIY centre in Croydon

for the press ran out. The Blair team loves acronyms, and it was with visible pleasure that his advisers declared that TB (Tony Blair) left MBT (Millbank Tower) after his morning Q & A within minutes of the ETD. "You may be slightly cooed," warned a press aide as the buses rumbled into Northampton. And, sure enough, in the town's 700-year-old market place, the almond-dusted hacks were herded, their mobile phones lowing gently, into a metal-fenced pen. This, it was ex-

plained, was to avoid the press "scrumming" around the Labour leader. Mr Blair's remarks on the ensuing walkabout would be relayed to the pen by a public address system, we were assured.

All morning rumours had been circulating that the "people's podium", Mr Blair's answer to John Major's soapbox, would be a piece of technological wizardry. It turned out, disappointingly, to be a box. A grey box, with some non-slip red carpet nailed on top, but a box

nonetheless. Mr Blair bounded on to it. "Hello, Northampton," he said in a crowd pleasing welcome surely first practised in school days with the Ugly Rumours and perhaps inspired by the bus's previous occupants. "Yeah," said a chorus of Northampton voices. "God bless you Tony," added one.

The location of the walkabout was kept secret until the last moment to avoid any organised heckling, and shoppers appeared wholly surprised, but quietly gratified, to

be treated to a sudden Sermon on the Box. Mr Blair and his wife plunged into the crowd. The PA system immediately coughed and died, and the assembled press broke out of their enclosure and stamped after them to form the traditional scrum.

Despite the cliché, politi-

cians usually avoid baby kissing, but the exultant Blair pucker up at regular intervals across the town square.

"I bet there's handsome eyes behind those shades," Charlie told Chris Lacey, a man with thick, wraparound dark glasses who, luckily for her, turned out not to be blind. He asked for a kiss, she obliged and was

declared to be "A pretty good kisser".

Mr Blair, meanwhile, planted a smacker without blenching on an ice-cream stained toddler, who then made strenuous efforts to rub it off. "Not sure about that reaction," said Mr Blair. "I'll put you down as an undecided."

End of road for a trusty soapbox

MAJOR'S BUS

JOHN MAJOR's soapbox, mentioned in Tory dispatches for its battle role in the 1992 general election, faces the threat of redundancy (Arthur Leathley writes).

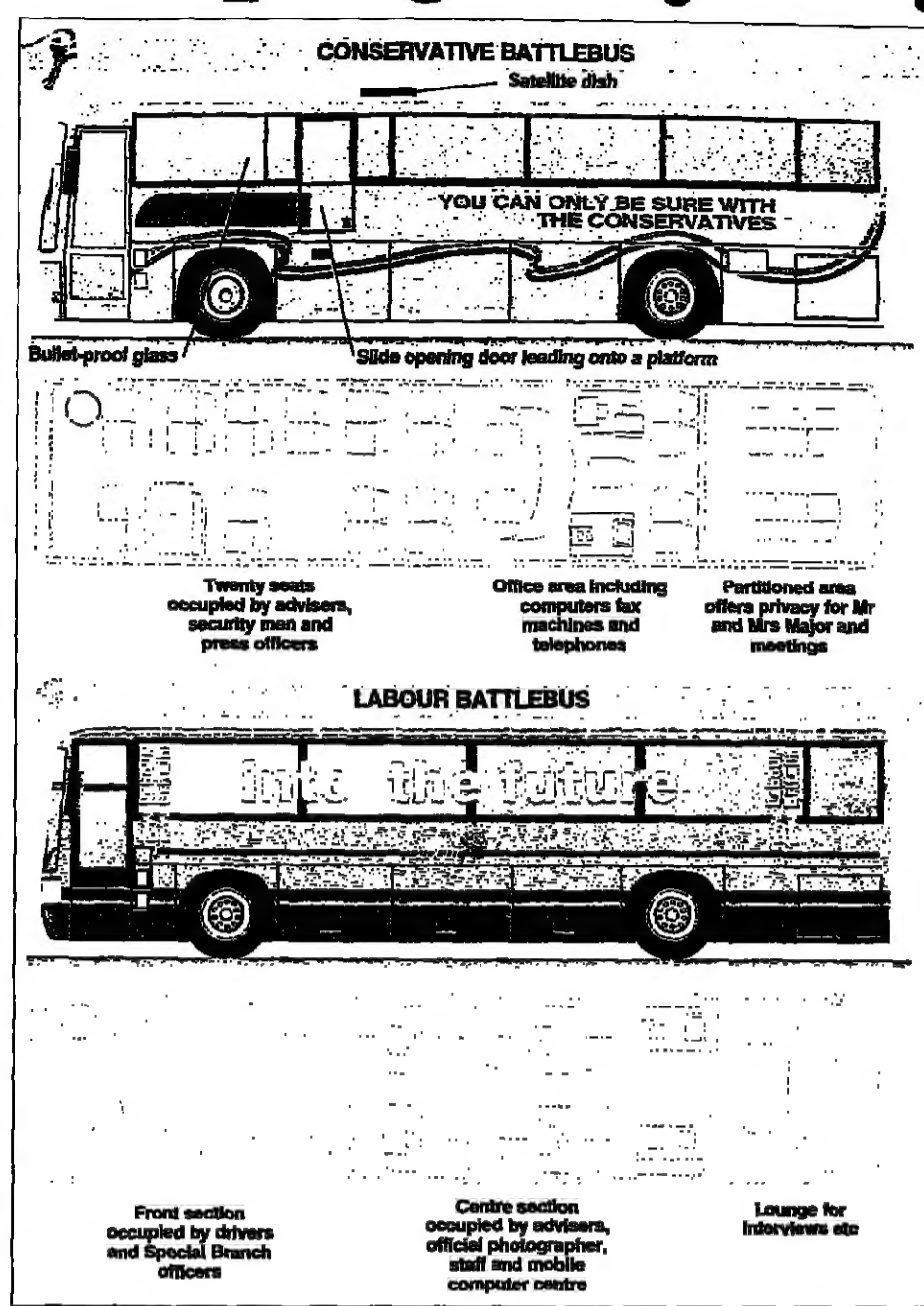
Only two weeks after being unveiled again as the Prime Minister's electioneering weapon, the taped-up wooden box is to be "downsized" in the shadow of a grander rival. A gleaming metallic and much larger version of the box is about to enter the fray.

Senior Tories pointed proudly to the new platform, which slides out from Mr Major's campaign bus, as a key gadget from which the Prime Minister will address crowds across the country.

The platform on stilts enables Mr Major to step from a side-door of the coach and address crowds from three feet above the ground. Apparently the brainchild of Brian Mawhinney, the Tory party chairman, it will enable the Prime Minister more room to manoeuvre when addressing crowds.

The bus hums with electronic gadgetry to ensure maximum security and that the Prime Minister maintains constant contact with ministers. Computers, fax machines and digital telephones have been fitted on the gleaming red, white and blue vehicle, which has only 20 seats because the rear has been converted into office space.

Emblazoned with the Tory party slogan "You can only be sure with the Conservatives" and a facsimile of Mr Major's signature, it is expected to travel more than 9,000 miles during the election campaign.



Defector urges Conservative waverers to join him in new 'One Nation' party



Howarth: abandoned the Tories in 1995

THE Tory defector Alan Howarth joined Tony Blair on the election platform yesterday as part of a drive to convince Tory waverers that New Labour was now "the one-nation party" in British politics (Jill Sherman writes).

Mr Howarth, who defected to Labour on the eve of the 1995 Conservative conference, has been appointed to head a taskforce to appeal to disillusioned Tory voters. The recently selected candidate for the safe Labour seat of Newport East is to write to thousands of Conservatives across the country, including councillors, who have been identified as potential switchers to Labour. "My

message to them is simple. New Labour is real. It has changed for the better," Mr Howarth said. "It represents the best hope for our country. It is the one-nation party in British politics today. Support it and it will change Britain for the better."

Mr Howarth said that he had left the Tory party "because it had changed for the worse" and had not had a single second thought since he had done so. "The party I was a member of has taken a march to the extreme of politics. It has lost sight of what it once stood for and abandoned the decent one-nation tradition in British politics." Labour

understood the role of the market economy but it also sought to heal social division and to extend opportunity regardless of background, he argued. "It matches support for enterprise with support for the weakest in society."

Later he told Radio 4's *World at One* that he was certain there were several Tory MPs deeply unhappy about the direction their party was taking. "Kenneth Clarke is now the only one standing for one-nation politics," he said.

Blair said Mr Howarth would play a "key role" in Labour's campaign.

Leading article, page 21

Best to hold your nose, should you venture round Westminster

Perhaps the most brazen of all the negative campaigners yesterday were the Liberal Democrats. At the party's 7.30am press conference, the media were treated to a Punch & Judy show. Punch and Judy (Tony and John) kept hopping each other on the head. This was meant to convey Liberal Democrat disgust at "negative campaigning".

The fact that it was also a way for Paddy to hop both his rivals on the head was never mentioned. By 8am the smell of coffee was already mingled with the odour of sanctity.

Then came the Labour press conference. Tony Blair, who has professed his disgust at negative campaigning, poked slyly at the Tories' difficulties over "sleaze" allegations. This was not (we were to understand) negative campaigning. It did not count as negative, because the Tories had "brought it on themselves". He then attacked John Major for lacking leadership. Ah. So criticising people is not nega-

tive if their problems are their own fault.

By 9.30am, as I joined journalists queuing outside Conservative Central Office for Major's own press conference, the odour of sanctity around Westminster had become a stench.

There was a burst of weird, piped *musique noir* to set the scene, and in stalked Brian Mawhinney. After a momentary shudder, the glint of John Major's spectacles—and in came the Prime Minister. He wore the pale, tired, cross look of a man who has sat indoors throughout a sunny Bank holiday weekend, fretting over adverse newspaper reports, while the rest of Britain frolicked on its lawn.

He was spoiling for a fight. Tony Blair was "chicken". Why had he sidled out of a TV debate? Any time, any place: Major was ready. He would accept the terms proposed by the television channels. This was presented as a new challenge.

I felt sure I had heard the political novelist Michael



MATTHEW PARRIS

Doobs (who has been negotiating for the Tories over the terms) say almost exactly this, last week, on the news. Nobody noticed, so Mr Major had rehearsed the challenge and served it up again.

He was tackled on the subject of Piers Merchant. Ten minutes earlier, we had seen a dazed-looking Michael Heseltine wandering around. The Deputy Prime Minister tried last week to snuff out Mr Merchant's

career. Mr Major seemed not to recall this episode. "Piers has been foolish," he said rather as might an infants' school headmistress report some minor difficulty with potty-training.

He was tackled on the subject of Sir Michael Hirst. He and Norma had telephoned to say how "sad and sympathetic" they were. He sounded genuinely upset.

Then he was tackled over Neil Hamilton. Major raged at the unfairness of a world in which Mr Hamilton had been pre-judged. He was articulate and convincing. He would have been even more convincing if in the backs of our minds had not lurked the suspicion that Major shared the world's judgment; wished Mr Hamilton would go away; would have jettisoned him had he the means; but, lacking the means, was making the best of a bad job. Mr Major made a dogged and spirited best of it. But the Prime Minister, too, was holding his nose.

Liberal Democrats, page 13

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Loyal ladies of Tatton stand by their man

By RUSSELL JENKINS

NEIL HAMILTON'S immediate political career was saved not by John Major but by the loyalty and determination of the Tory ladies of Tatton, who clearly adore the suave, charming and right-wing politics of their MP.

The Tatton women's association, whose members refused to be budged by newspaper headlines or Central Office phone calls, held the key to his retaining one of the great prizes in British politics — the safest Tory seat in the North.

Cushioned by wealth and separated from the problems of urban Britain by green belt, they have remained staunchly loyal to their MP. He knows the devastation threatened by Manchester Airport's proposed second runway to house prices in the



Meeting and greeting: Neil Hamilton and his wife Christine, far right, are a formidable constituency team, with the local Tory women's association a source of conspicuous support

Major eases calls to quit

By PHILIP WEBSTER
POLITICAL EDITOR

JOHN MAJOR relaxed the pressure on Neil Hamilton by backing his right to stand in the election if his constituency party was behind him.

After failing at the weekend to persuade Mr Hamilton to go in the interests of the Tory party, the Prime Minister attacked Tony Blair's claim that he would have got rid of Mr Hamilton. At a press conference, Mr Major said: "I don't think that asking people who are wholly innocent to stand aside is leadership. If that happens this week, what happens if there is some unsubstantiated rumour next week? Would Mr Blair ask them to stand aside? At what point would the carnival end?"

He acknowledged that it was right for Mr Hamilton to stand down as Corporate Affairs Minister because of the sensitive nature of the job. He said that he would be "severe" if it was proved that Mr Hamilton and others were guilty.

Asked about the future of Piers Merchant, the MP for Beckenham, Mr Major said his colleague had admitted to behaving "foolishly" over an alleged relationship with a 17-year-old Soho nightclub hostess. He said the constituents of Beckenham would now decide whom to select as their Member of Parliament and he thought it would be Mr Merchant.

He hinted that changes to party rules to give Central Office a decision in the selection of candidates were possible. He said the party had fiercely guarded the independence of local constituencies: "They have to work with the candidate; they have to support him or her in their campaign." But he added: "We may have to look at that later."

THE TORIES

villages. For the faithful the explosion of traffic in Alderley Edge caused by the completion of the A34 by-pass is much more important than a lorryload of sleaze.

On these questions Mr Hamilton is sound. His brand of rigorous, anti-bureaucratic Conservatism finds an echo in the Cheshire community where old money and older values sit comfortably with the silver-grey Mercedes of the new rich. One local dissident complained recently that Tatton was one of those seats that would elect a monkey providing it campaigned in Tory colours.

The cash-for-questions affair, which has embroiled the MP in what he has told friends is a living hell, has largely passed by the ordinary voters of Tatton. His supporters in the branches and on the constituency executive have formed a protective ring around Mr Hamilton and his wife, Christine, who together make a formidable team.

As the controversy has raged about him, the MP has spoken openly of being bathed in the love and affection of his ladies. The fury being whipped up daily in

Westminster, first with Tim Smith's resignation, then over the allegations against Piers Merchant, was always regarded with deep suspicion. In the red-brick bunker in Knutsford that is headquarters to the local Conservative association, the enemy are the "bungling, incompetent" spin-doctors of Central Office.

Mrs Hamilton, blonde and broad-shouldered, has made no bones about who she blamed. She has turned the air blue ordering the "greasy reptiles" of the press to get off the church doctodils.

Yesterday the Hamilton camp was jubilant that John Major had confirmed his original line that the MPs accused of taking cash for

questions are innocent until proven guilty. They are convinced that the adoption meeting on April 8 will be a formality and that the last hurdle in the way of Mr Hamilton standing as a candidate in the Conservative interest has been surmounted. He is turning his mind, for the first time, to his election address.

With Sir Gordon Downey's report postponed until after the general election, Mr Hamilton's official engagement diary is bare for the week. However, he is busy with a series of low-key meetings with those constituency members — never more than a handful — who have urged him to step down while doubts remained over his

honour and integrity. "That is a mark of the man that even with his position confirmed he still wants to answer the doubters," one senior Tory said.

Alan Barnes, chairman of the Tatton association, welcomed the Prime Minister's initiative and issued a plea to "get back to the real issues" to be debated during the election period. Loyalists were less reserved.

They expressed their delight that the "flip-flop" goings-on in Central Office is now over and believe that their loyalty to their MP has been vindicated. Mr Hamilton's power base in Tatton comes from the steady cultivation of the women's association, where the comfortable

ladies of Knutsford and Wilmslow adore him. These are the women, largely elderly, who keep the association afloat and pay for its upkeep with bring-and-buy sales, coffee mornings and bridge nights, and Mrs Hamilton makes sure that they are cherished.

When Jeannie Bowler, 69, of Great Warford, was sick recently, the Hamiltons left a bouquet of spring flowers on her doorstep — a gesture that cannot be neutralised by any number of headlines in *The Guardian*.

Pauline Breland, the women's association treasurer, said: "It's brilliant news. I have been in touch with Neil every day and he has been going through hell. We do

support him. He is a loyal worker for Tatton Conservatives. At the adoption meeting I am sure one or two people will get up and have their say but the majority will support him and we will get on and fight for him at the general election."

Barbara Armitage, chairman of Alderley Edge Parish Council, said: "I am pleased the Prime Minister has come around to our way of thinking that everybody is innocent until proved guilty."

Nigel Schofield, treasurer of the Alderley Edge branch and a travel business executive, said that the Hamiltons appeared to sustain each other. The MP brought an intellectualism to the partnership while Christine was the

dynamic personality in the constituency. "They make a lovely blend," he said. "John Major waited to see how things went. I don't call that dithering. I call that judgment. At the right time he said that this man has not been found guilty of anything, why should he not stand if put forward as the candidate for the constituency?"

The prize is worth fighting for. Boundary changes mean that the Tatton constituency has taken in parts of middle-class Wilmslow and Alderley Edge and jettisoned industrial, Labour-voting Northwich. With a notional majority of 22,365, it forms the safest seat in the North and the fifth safest Tory seat in the land.

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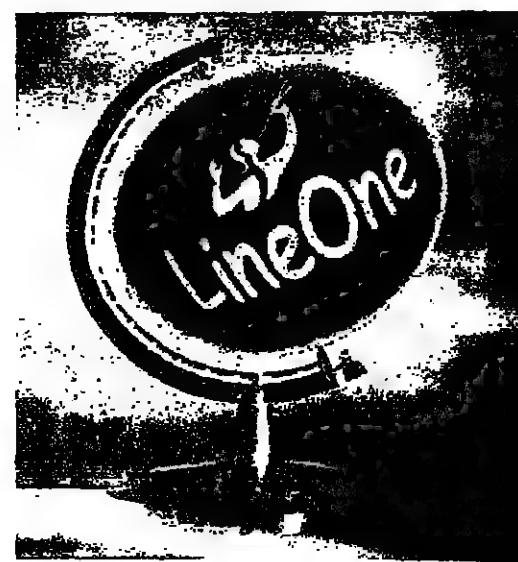
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By GILLIAN BOWDITCH

He tried to avoid questions about Allan Stewart, MP for Eastwood, and Sir Michael Hirst, the party chairman in Scotland, who has admitted a homosexual affair, instead

Mr Forsyth said the voters were more concerned with issues such as employment. "Scotland has an outstanding record in creating jobs. Since 1991 more than 50,000 new jobs have been created here through inward investment. New jobs and falling employment doesn't happen by accident. Under the Tories,

The Scottish National Party claimed that employment in Scotland has fallen by 1,000 since 1992, compared with a rise of more than half a million in Britain as a whole.

Mr Forsyth, playing an unaccustomed supporting



The most, however, that anyone on the platform would admit to yesterday, was that there might be some "malcontents" within the party—not enough, according to Ms Goldie, to justify an inquiry or indeed any further action. It was, said Mr Forsyth "a set-back", nothing further. With that proceedings were brought abruptly, and ill temperedly, to a close.

And that was just day one.

By NICHOLAS WATT

**NORTHERN
IRELAND**

that the IRA would start a wave of violence if Britain refused to negotiate with republicans. "The options are there for the British, either conflict or negotiations . . . If it is to be the road to conflict, then the volunteers of Ogligh na hEireann will defeat the British Government."

Road to gridlock

The RAC warned travelling political campaigners that they risked being caught in traffic jams in at least 25 marginal constituencies. Edmund King, the RAC's head of campaigns, said: "We are today issuing an election challenge to the main political parties to explain how they will keep Britain moving into the next century."

Labour has promised to give special planning protection to the Forest of Dean in Gloucestershire. Frank Dobson, the Shadow Environment Secretary, said it was vulnerable to quarrying and open-cast mining and would receive a protected status appropriate to its history and character, after consultation with local people.

Piers Merchant, the MP accused of having an affair with a nightclub hostess, is expected to survive a confrontation with his local supporters tonight and be adopted as Tory candidate for Beckenham. Mr Merchant is likely to face at least 300 members of the Beckenham Conservative Association to answer questions.

Robin Cook, the Shadow Foreign Secretary, launched his re-election campaign in his West Lothian constituency with the help of 18-year-old twins, Eilidh and Kate MacDonald. A high proportion of voters in the area are under 30. Mr Cook said: "By using their vote young people can make their voices heard at the highest level."

Photograph, page 24

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Cryer's death leaves widow holding the political baby

By DAMIAN WHITWORTH

LIKE many other women with grown-up working daughters, Ann Cryer was looking after her grandson yesterday. However, she had other things on her mind.

There were meetings with Labour Party workers, who were busy moving her campaign headquarters into new premises after a fire at the old offices last week. Then she had to escort Harriet Harman, Labour's Shadow Social Security Secretary, on a visit to a nursery school. In the afternoon she was meeting a stonemason to discuss the wording for a plaque on her husband's grave.

Bob Cryer, the former MP for Bradford South who was killed in a car crash less than three years ago, was previously the member for Keighley, which he represented for nine years. Now his widow is standing for the west Yorkshire seat, which includes the Brontë tourist town of Haworth and nearby Ilkley.

Mrs Cryer is seeking to oust Gary Waller, the Conservative, who has a majority of

3,500. A swing of slightly more than 3 per cent would be enough, so it is a seat that Labour has to win if it is to get a majority. However, the local party has had an uneasy time.

The decision of the national party to impose a women-only shortlist was opposed by many. Mrs Cryer, 57, was approached to stand as a unity candidate who was acceptable to those alarmed by the prospect of a sharp-suited new

Labourite fighting the seat. Mrs Cryer, who had worked as her husband's assistant, had been approached to fight the by-election in Bradford South after his death. "It was too soon. I wasn't up to it," she said. "When they asked me to stand in Keighley, I had to think about it for five weeks."

Eventually it was Tony Benn who persuaded her. He said: "You can't remain a widow all your life."

Her husband had been hugely popular in the constitu-

ency, but lost his seat when a boundary change brought in Tory voters from Ilkley. Her image as a grandmother of five is also valuable. The two-year-old with her yesterday was called Robert because he was born two months after his grandfather's death.

But while Mrs Cryer insists that Keighley is the only seat for which she would stand, it is clear that politics is a family love affair. Her son, John, is standing as a Labour candidate in Hornchurch against the Tory Robin Squire, who has a 9,000 majority.

She recoils when the word dynasty is mentioned. "I'm not going to be a Bob Cryer mark two," she insisted. "We shared a great many interests but there are other things that I am probably better informed about and more interested in than my husband was, such as early years education and the benefits system."

Nevertheless, it is impossible not to see in her many of the political instincts of her late husband, to whom she refers as "the lifetime rebel".



The late Bob Cryer with his wife, Ann

She uses the word "bolshie" admiringly about young Asian women in her constituency who have formed their own women's group and are finding jobs.

Mr Waller, who has done better than the national average in retaining the vote in previous elections, is planning to campaign hard on his record. He says he has been building bridges with local ethnic groups and opposing

policies of the Labour-controlled Bradford council, such as new housing developments which he says are unpopular. However, he is also hoping for a marked improvement in the party's national popularity.

"Local factors are significant, but there's a limit to the extent that they can come into play," he said. "I am looking for a national shift in the opinion polls in order to have a good chance."

If Mrs Cryer wins, she will not be the first wife to have pulled on her husband's political boots. Irene Adams, whose husband Allen died of a heart attack before the 1992 election, won his Paisley North seat for Labour. Llimos Golding took her husband John's place when he stepped down as Labour MP for Newcastle-under-Lyme to become general secretary of the National Communications Union.

With a son who is also a bright Labour prospect and grandchildren already making the loudest noises on the campaign trail, Ann is unlikely to be the last Cryer in Westminster.



Ann Cryer with her grandson Robert, two, at a nursery in Keighley yesterday



Shugging it out: the Lib Dems' puppet show

Ashdown takes a swipe at Punch and Judy politics

By POLLY NEWTON, POLITICAL REPORTER

JOHN MAJOR and Tony Blair were branded the Punch and Judy of politics by Paddy Ashdown yesterday as the Liberal Democrats sought to shift sleaze from the top of the election agenda.

Mr Ashdown, speaking at the start of his party's full-scale campaign, argued that voters were fed up with confrontational politics. He challenged his opponents to focus on "the big issues" of education and the health service.

The Liberal Democrats began their first early-morning press conference of the campaign with a short film featuring caricature puppets of Mr Blair and Mr Major beating each

other with sticks in a Punch and Judy hut. In squeaky voices, each puppet protested that he had thought of a particular policy first and insisted he would implement it before the other.

Later, Mr Ashdown unveiled a billboard poster in London on the same theme. He said the Liberal Democrats wanted "an honest and positive campaign". He accused Labour of offering a "false prospectus" on education by claiming standards could be improved without more spending.

Mr Ashdown said that Labour's planned abolition of the assisted places scheme — which gives some children government financial help to attend private schools — would raise only £150 million. After three years that would have reduced class sizes by only one pupil.

The claim was later denied by Gordon Brown, the Shadow Chancellor, who said that the Liberal Democrats were "absolutely wrong". Mr Brown insisted that Labour was determined "over time" to cut class sizes for children aged

five, six and seven, and said the amount of money the party could recoup by abolishing assisted places had been confirmed by independent experts from the National Foundation for Educational Research.

The Liberal Democrats' manifesto, to be published on Friday, will promise that the party would put 1p on the basic rate of income tax to allow an investment of at least £2 billion a year in education. Mr Ashdown said: "Only by investing more in books and equipment, cutting class sizes and providing nursery education can we give our children the best possible start in life."

No party should make promises without explaining how they would be paid for. "People are right to be angry that the Conservatives promised tax cuts year on year and then brought in 22 tax rises, including VAT on domestic fuel. This must not happen again."

Pressed on the party's plans for the Tattler constituency of Neil Hamilton, who is alleged to have taken payments in return for asking parliamentary questions, Mr Ashdown would say only that there was still "one scene in this unpleasant drama which is yet to be played out" — the verdict of the Tattler constituency party.

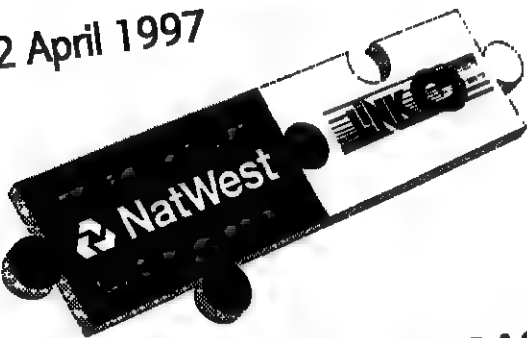
"The right thing now is to get back to the big issues in this campaign. I am really worried that we can get through four weeks of campaign talking about nothing but sleaze. It's our intention to move things on to other issues."

Lord Holme of Cheltenham, the Liberal Democrats' election campaign director, denied that the Punch and Judy puppet show was the kind of negative campaigning for which the party has criticised its opponents. He said that it was a humorous representation of what many voters really felt.

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News Release

2 April 1997



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Netanyahu blames Egypt for fanning flames of militancy

ISRAEL'S embattled Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, angrily accused Egypt last night of "fanning the flames of radicalism" in the Middle East and of helping to push the peace process to its present state of crisis.

Referring to the recent upsurge of violence that has left more than 500 Palestinians injured and to the Arab League's determination to turn back the diplomatic clock and isolate Israel, the Prime Minister said: "It seems to me that Egypt is playing a very unfortunate part in all this by fanning the flames of radicalism rather than inducing a more moderate position. This idea of reactivating the Arab boycott is a key example."

Mr Netanyahu, 47, hit back hard at suggestions made hours earlier in an Israeli newspaper by President Mubarak of Egypt that Israel had brought peace-making to its lowest point since President Sadat first landed in Jerusalem 20 years ago.

Mr Netanyahu would not be drawn into similar criticisms of Jordan or of King Hussein, whose letter accusing him of pushing the region towards "an abyss of bloodshed" had been made public. He hinted that the King had adopted a different approach in their recent private conversation after King Hussein paid his respects to the mourning families of seven Israeli schoolgirls killed by a Jordanian soldier.

Mr Netanyahu was scathing about the approach adopted by the semi-official Egyptian media which he said was



Christopher Walker, in an interview with Binyamin Netanyahu, finds the Israeli leader relishing his isolation

"the most anti-Semitic in the world" and he ridiculed attempts by the Egyptian leader to argue that he had no control over its content. He said that the peace process was threatened not by Israel, which he said was sticking to the 1993 Oslo peace accords, but by the indirect Palestinian encouragement of Islamic terror.

Speaking only hours after two more Palestinian suicide

“If we halt housing projects in our own capital, we may as well shut the country”

bombs had exploded in the Gaza Strip, both of which he said were planted not by Hamas, which planted last month's bomb in a Tel Aviv café, but by the smaller Islamic Jihad. Mr Netanyahu said the bombs had been a "great setback for peace".

He dismissed suggestions by Palestinian leaders that one of the bombs might not have been a suicide attempt and, referring to his earlier charge

that Yasser Arafat, the Palestinian leader, had recently given the "green light" to the resumption of Islamic terrorism, he said that the Gaza blasts showed "that the traffic lights have not been changed".

Mr Netanyahu called Islamic Jihad and Hamas, the Islamic Resistance Movement, "an obedient opposition" which acted as proxy for such Palestine Liberation Organisation movements as Mr Arafat's Fatah faction, which had overtly dropped their earlier espousal of terrorism as a weapon. "The whole idea with terrorism is that you cannot fight it physically if you do not fight it morally," the Prime Minister said. "That is to denounce it as a weapon of anything."

During the 45-minute interview he made clear that Israel would remain unshakable in its refusal to resume peace talks until terrorism was abandoned, although he was less specific on how Mr Arafat could prove to Israel that this side of the peace bargain had been kept.

Looking untroubled by the increasing tide of international condemnation of Israel's stance over building houses for 32,000 Jews on land at Har Homa in occupied east Jerusalem, Mr Netanyahu said he had been "aghast" at world reaction to the Israeli action.

He made clear again and again that it was Mr Arafat's "encouragement of terrorism" that had threatened to end the peace process. He said that talks would not resume until the PLO had showed a new determination to deal with it.

Far from showing any signs of compromise, Mr Netanyahu appeared more confident of his position than during previous interviews. He appeared almost to relish Israel's international stance as a lone nation with many enemies, especially in the media, and likened sympathy for the Palestinians with that accorded to Cuba in its conflict with America 20 years ago.

Mr Netanyahu also ridiculed the suggestion that Israel might stop work at Har Homa as a condition for returning to the negotiating table. He accused the Palestinians of spreading false expectations among their people. "Jerusalem is the rock of our existence," he said. "If we were to halt housing projects in our own capital, we may as well shut down the country."



Soldiers check a taxi damaged in a blast outside Kfar Darom. Palestinians challenged Israeli claims that it was the work of a suicide bomber

Suicide bomber targets school bus

FROM ROSS DUNN IN JERUSALEM

THIRTY seconds may have saved the lives of a group of Israeli children from the first of two apparent suicide bombings in the Gaza Strip yesterday.

The children were on board a bus waiting to depart from the Jewish settlement of Netzarim when a huge explosion was heard outside the heavily guarded compound.

Israeli military officials believe the bomber detonated himself prematurely, out of fear of detection. Half a minute later and the explosion could have taken the lives of the schoolchildren.

One of the residents of Netzarim, Moshe Hoshen, said: "The school bus, which leaves every morning at 7 and is escorted by two [army] Jeeps... was about to leave the settlement. And at 7 o'clock precisely we all heard a large explosion... the bus driver received instructions to go back into the settlement." The bomber "probably wanted to jump at the bus", he said.

The second blast occurred a short while later outside the Jewish settlement of Kfar Darom, ripping off the door of a passing Arab taxi.

Witnesses said the bomber was riding on a donkey cart and blew himself up when he was between a taxi and an Israeli army Jeep. Five Palestinians were wounded in the blast, one seriously. Both bombers were reportedly wearing Palestinian police uniforms.

But an aide to Yasser Arafat, President of the Palestinian Authority, said the Arab killed in the second blast had died from an explosive charge thrown at him from an Israeli army Jeep. "In Kfar Darom area, an Israeli military Jeep hurled a grenade or a bomb at [Palestinian] passers-by, killing one and wounding others. This is information that we have collected from passers-by and victims," said Ahmed Abdel-Rahman, Secretary-General of the Palestinian Cabinet.

The last time that a co-ordinated suicide bombing attack occurred in the Gaza Strip, the Islamic Jihad

claimed responsibility. But the organisation made no comment yesterday.

In a highly unusual development, another Islamic organisation, Hamas, which has also admitted responsibility for such attacks in the past, denied any involvement in the bombings. The organisation said Israel was behind the attacks.

A Hamas official said: "This has nothing to do with the Islamic movement or Hamas. This bombing was done by Israeli intelligence and its [Palestinian] collaborators in an attempt to create an international problem between the Islamic movement and the

Palestinian Authority."

The latest explosions came after nearly two weeks of clashes between Israeli security forces and Palestinians protesting against the construction of a new Jewish settlement in east Jerusalem.

As the unrest flared again yesterday, Israeli soldiers shot dead Kamal al-Zaro, a Palestinian youth, at a roadblock near the West Bank town of Hebron. The Israeli security forces also opened fire on Palestinian stone-throwers in Nablus, killing an off-duty Palestinian policeman. Haitha Mansour was hit in the eye by a bullet. Four other protesters were also wounded.



Kamal al-Zaro: killed in car at roadblock



Binyamin Netanyahu in the Knesset yesterday. He denies that Israel is responsible for the present crisis

Cyprus telly addicts lose link to Britain

FROM MICHAEL THEODOULOU IN NICOSIA

THOUSANDS of Britons in Cyprus were last night contemplating a future without Cilla Black, Jim Davidson and Mr Blobby after British Forces television began scrambling its signal to prevent shows reaching viewers not entitled to see them.

Although they had been forewarned, many pensioners and expatriates confessed that they were upset. A widow in her 60s was planning to return to Britain to keep abreast of the goings-on in Coronation Street, while a 60,000 other viewers were able to tune in to the station that broadcasts many of the most popular programmes from Britain, including a mixture of BBC and ITN.

The station first responded to legal threats by ditching Premier League football three years ago. "It's a shame because the station was our prime PR asset here," Captain Tully said.

Charlie Charalambous, the television critic on the Cyprus Mail, lamented: "Who's going to get excited about Spanish soaps, Greek melodramas and ministers telling porkies on the box?"

The Ministry of Defence had no desire to pull the plug on British Forces television. It was responding to pressure from local stations, struggling in a market with just over half a million viewers, which had bought the rights to broadcast live British Premiership football games.

Forces television was allowed to show football provided it was available only to the bases and those serving with the United Nations in Nicosia. However, at least 60,000 other viewers were able to tune in to the station that broadcasts many of the most popular programmes from Britain, including a mixture of BBC and ITN.

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Tougher US immigration law prompts illegal residents to tie the knot

FROM DAVID ADAMS
IN MIAMI

THOUSANDS of illegal immigrants in the United States, fearing that new laws will make it harder for them to remain in the country, are trying to shoot down the system with Cupid's arrow.

The number of immigrants flooding into marriage licence bureaux is soaring. In Miami, marriage applications have almost doubled, from 6,742 in the first three months of last year to almost

11,400 so far this year. There were more than 5,000 last month. Cities with large migrant populations, such as New York and Houston, have reported similar increases.

"It's unbelievable," Roberto Rebozo, the head of the Marriage Licensing Bureau in Miami, said. "What's love got to do with it? Not a lot, he said. "Without a doubt it's got to do with the new law... and people trying to get married to maintain their residence in the United States."

Immigration experts said, how-

ever, that getting married would not help most illegal immigrants to dodge the new laws since marrying an American citizen only helped if the immigrant had legal status in the first place. The confusion, experts said, stemmed from new provisions aimed at tightening entry controls into the United States, and penalising people who overstayed.

Staff at one courthouse here said that they had noticed longer queues each morning earlier this year. They also noticed the odd couples

— young women paired with much older men. The staff said that last week a young woman had to help her doddering "groom" into the building. There are also cases where the women are old enough to be grandmothers of the men they are marrying. "We have marriages here where, when it comes to 'You may kiss the bride', the husband will say 'No Thanks!'," Mr Rebozo said.

Standing in line to apply for a licence at a Miami courthouse, Marco Pineda, a 44-year-old car

mechanic, confessed that his decision to marry was laced with a strong dose of pragmatism. Although he is a legal resident, of 16 years standing, his would-be bride, Carmen Montoya, 46, is not.

"The law is very confusing," said Ms Montoya, a house cleaner who came to the United States in 1983 from Guatemala. Her annual work permit expires in June and under the new laws she is not sure whether it would be renewed this time. "Marriage gives us a little extra hope," she said.

Fear has also spawned an illegal industry of marriage brokers who charge desperate clients \$5,000 (£3,145) or more to arrange matches. Carmen, a 45-year-old illegal immigrant from Peru, said she met her 66-year-old husband just before they married last week. She paid her husband \$2,500, plus \$300 to his sister for brokering the union. A second instalment, of at least \$2,500, will be due if and when she receives her residency papers. Under the arrangement he will move into her flat later this week.

an event she now dreads. Experts have issued warnings that the consequences of a fraudulent marriage are severe, and include deportation and a life-time ban on re-entering the country.

Washington: Six hours before the tough new immigration law was to go into effect, a federal judge granted a request to delay its implementation until Saturday. The judge ruled that the Administration had failed to give immigrants sufficient time to prepare for the sweeping changes. (Reuters)

Pakistan removes President's power to dismiss leaders

BY ZAHID HUSSAIN IN KARACHI AND CHRISTOPHER THOMAS, SOUTH ASIA CORRESPONDENT

PAKISTAN'S parliament yesterday stripped the President of his power to dismiss elected governments and dissolve the National Assembly. A constitutional amendment Bill, unanimously passed by both houses of parliament, also clipped the President's prerogative to appoint military chiefs and provincial governors.

The decision, which restores the supremacy of parliament, is a turning point for Pakistan's struggling democracy. Until now one of the biggest obstacles to democracy has been the President's provision, under which four elected governments were dismissed since the end of martial law in 1985. The measure was introduced by General Zia ul-Haq, the late dictator, to ensure that he could dismiss any Prime Minister who became troublesome or too independent.

Nawaz Sharif, the Prime Minister, elected in February with an overwhelming parliamentary majority, introduced the constitutional amendments to scrap the provision after consulting his Cabinet. President Leghari, who used the powers to sack Benazir Bhutto's Government last November on the ground of corruption, supported removal of the measure.

"This is the greatest day for democracy," a visibly delighted Mr Sharif told supporters. He is now the most powerful Prime Minister since the end of martial law, with a two-thirds parliamentary major-

ity, and is safe from dismissal. In 1993 he was sacked as Prime Minister by President Ghulam Ishaq Khan on the grounds that his Government was incompetent and corrupt, although the Supreme Court restored him to power. He resigned immediately and lost the subsequent election.

Miss Bhutto was also dismissed by Mr Khan in 1990 for running a corrupt Government. Her Pakistan People's Party voted in favour of the change yesterday and Miss

Politicians of all parties hail this as the greatest day for democracy in Pakistan

Bhutto, whose party was crushed in elections in February by Mr Sharif's Pakistan Muslim League, congratulated the Prime Minister "for his bold move". She said it was a day when politicians should forget their differences.

Removal of the provision comes after years of power struggles between Presidents and Prime Ministers. Politicians from all parties, describing it as a historic day for democracy, declared that governments would now be an-

swerable to the people, not an appointed official. Khalid Anwar, the law adviser to the Prime Minister, said the legislation marked an end to the painful legacy of martial law and the start of an era belonging to the people.

The military, still a formidable force in Pakistani politics, will no longer have access to the simple expedient of using the President to dismiss governments it does not like. The military was behind the dismissals of Miss Bhutto and Mr Sharif because it feared the country was being bankrupted by fraud and mismanagement.

Many of the new top soldiers in Pakistan are determined to distance the army from politics. The armed forces would almost certainly have been consulted before the constitutional amendment was put forward by Mr Sharif, and it is a sign of their more democratic approach that they evidently raised no objection.

Zia introduced the eighth amendment to the constitution under a bargain with politicians to end martial law. He used it to sack Mohammad Khan Junejo, his handpicked Prime Minister, in 1988. Soon afterwards Zia died, possibly murdered, in a mysterious aircraft crash.

The relic of martial law he left behind has prevented Pakistani democracy taking root, and commentators described the change as a defining moment for the country as it approaches the fiftieth anniversary of its creation. The change also means the Prime Minister will have to approve the President's appointment of armed forces chiefs and provincial governors.

The army has ruled Pakistan for half its life, but direct military intervention has become almost inconceivable. The danger in scrapping the presidential power to sack leaders is that there is no longer any ultimate sanction, save for elections, to deal with governments that allow politicians to plunder the Exchequer, as Miss Bhutto allegedly did during her last tenure.

Protesters delay cult leader's burial

BY QUENTIN LETTS

THE FAMILY of Marshall Applewhite, leader of the suicidal San Diego "Heaven's Gate" cult, may face a hard time trying to find somewhere to bury him.

Applewhite, who inspired 38 followers to kill themselves in California last week, was expected to be buried next to his father in a cemetery in San Antonio, Texas, but the cult leader's sister, Louise Winant, said that she had been advised that could lead to trouble.

"There have been pickets around the cemetery," she said. "The protesters have said that his grave won't be safe."

Mrs Winant had long lost touch with her odd brother before he encouraged his disciples to drink poison last week in order to keep an engagement with a UFO which they believed to be flying in the tail of the Hale-Bopp comet.

In San Diego yesterday, police started to pack up and conclude their investigation into the mass suicide. After initial fears that other groups of Applewhite followers elsewhere might follow suit, detectives linked to the case sought now to play down such suggestions. After interviewing former members of the cult group, police felt that the San Diego household was the only group over which Applewhite held sufficient sway.

Police technicians have so far resisted investigating in depth the computers which were found at the scene of the deaths, for fear of wiping out possible evidence.

The San Diego County Medical Examiner's Office said that eight of the men found dead at the cult's house had been surgically castrated, but that was not the cause of death. Sexual self-denial was a part of Applewhite's creed. It is not yet known where the castrations took place, as in normal circumstances a surgeon would balk at conducting such an operation.

Police also have yet to work out how the cult managed to obtain sufficient quantities of the phenobarbital which killed the first 37 cult members. The last two people to kill themselves did so using plastic bags after taking large doses of an opiate.



Villagers south of Calcutta with the "travelling Aids show" sponsored by the EU

EU helps to fight Indian Aids

FROM MICHAEL DYNES IN CALCUTTA

DISTRIBUTING free condoms in an impoverished village in West Bengal is not one of the European Union's most glamorous aid projects. However, with an estimated three million cases of Aids in India, the programme has an urgency unmatched by any other.

Here in the dingy backstreets of Diamond Harbour, a fishing village south of Calcutta, EU officials have been supplying broths with condoms for more than a year and teaching the prostitutes how to use them. Although prostitution is illegal, the 5,000

inhabitants of Diamond Harbour support about 15 brothels and an estimated 200 full-time and 100 part-time prostitutes. It is impossible to gauge the effectiveness of the initiative, which has so far cost the European taxpayer about £40,000. However, the giggling admission by Dipa, 25, a mother of two, that she would happily forget about a condom for a higher fee, suggests that it is probably limited.

Working under false names and lying to their families about the source of their income, for a few short years these young women can earn up to 5,000 rupees (£90) a month, for them a huge sum. Sanjib Kumar, one of the officials responsible for the EU's safe sex campaign, says: "We cannot tell them to stop selling their sex because we cannot provide them with an alternative income."

Years after the developed world first sounded the alarm over the spread of Aids, the message is only just beginning to filter through to some rural communities. Rickshaw and bullock carts carry the message "Avoid Aids — use a condom" to what appears to be a largely indifferent public.

Russians 'building nuclear shelters'

FROM IAN BRODIE IN WASHINGTON

RUSSIA continues to build deep underground bunkers and tunnels so that Kremlin leaders can survive a nuclear attack and escape from Moscow, according to a leaked CIA report yesterday.

The costly projects include a secret underground railway line from Victory Park Station on the Moscow Metro to President Yeltsin's dacha, 13 miles from the Kremlin, the report said.

A bunker for Russian leaders was said to be nearly complete at Voronovo, 46 miles south of Moscow, and a second bunker at Sharapovo, 34 miles from the capital, was described as having an underground railway running to it. Four bunker complexes within Moscow to house government leaders during a nuclear strike were being built or renovated, the report said.

Construction was continuing on a "nuclear-survivable" command post at Kovinsky mountain in the Urals, 850 miles east of Moscow, and satellite photographs of Yamantau mountain near the Urals town of Belorek showed digging at a deep underground complex.

The underground railway would allow the rapid evacuation of leaders from Moscow. They would then be flown to back-up headquarters at Yamantau or Kovinsky. The report said: "The command post at Kovinsky appears to provide the Russians with the means to retaliate against a nuclear attack."

All these details appeared in The Washington Times, which is a frequent conduit for CIA estimates of continued Cold War skulduggery by America's former adversaries. A CIA spokesman refused to comment, but someone in Washington's national security establishment had a motive for drawing attention to the two-week-old report, said to be labelled "top secret".

Outlays for the huge construction programme were said to be raising concerns in Washington about whether American aid to Russia was allowing Moscow to spend money on new strategic forces and the bomb-proof hideaways. Disclosure of the bunker network comes less than two weeks after Mr Yeltsin and President Clinton agreed in Helsinki to extend the deadline for Russia's compliance with nuclear arms cuts because of costs.

It could be argued that one reason why Russian leaders see no reduction of the nuclear threat is Nato's insistence on expanding to accommodate Moscow's former Iron Curtain allies. America's contingency bunkers have been largely abandoned and one is now a tourist attraction.

Quebec law will let language police give shopkeepers a tongue-lashing

FROM QUENTIN LETTS IN MONTREAL

MONTREAL'S English-speaking shopkeepers are furious about new legislation in Quebec which will give the province's language "police" far-reaching search-and-seizure powers to check that French is being used.

The powers were described by opponents as "more extreme than

any police powers currently in place in the Western world" and "worthy of Nazi Germany".

Supporters of the controversial Bill 40 argued that it simply defended Quebec's partly French culture by setting up a commission for the protection of the French language.

Bill 40, which is expected to pass into law this month, will allow Quebec government inspectors to

enter businesses "at any reasonable time" and "examine any products or documents, make copies and take photographs". No warrant will be required and the searches may be conducted at a suspect's home if it doubles as a business address.

If shopkeepers display signs which are in English only they are liable to fines. French-only signs are permitted. When signs are in both languages, the words in

French must be bigger. The Office de la Langue Française has the job of enforcing the province's much-disputed language laws designed to protect the use of French in the bilingual province. Anglophones allege that the laws have led to "bullying" of English-speaking, and particularly ethnic minority-run, businesses.

The Office employs 217 people, with an annual budget estimated

by opponents at C\$30 million (£13.5 million).

David Black, of the Quebec Committee for Canada, a group which opposes the francophone desires for Quebec independence, said: "In its two decades of operation the OLF has managed to fine only 179 people, at about \$63 each. Why do they need so many employees?"

Under Bill 40, provincial funds

and officials will be put at the use of anyone reporting abuses of the language laws. "The Commission shall provide assistance to complainants in drawing up their complaints," the Bill proposes.

In the past 30 years, when the French-speaking majority has exercised increasing muscle, more than 500,000 Quebecers emigrated, the highest population loss for a Canadian province.

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Cinema's invasion irritates Tuscans

By Richard Owen

RESIDENTS of Tuscany, far from being flattered by the use of Tuscan backdrops for hit films such as *The English Patient*, are becoming increasingly irritated by the invasion of their "earthly paradise" by "Anglo-Saxon filmmakers".

The English Patient, directed by Anthony Minghella and partly set in rural wartime Tuscany, is the latest in a long line of films which use the "Chianti-style" backdrop of cypresses, olive groves, terraced vineyards and terracotta villas. A special unit has been set up in Pisa to advise film-makers on which palazzo or piazza can be used.

La Repubblica said the trend had been started 12 years ago by the 1985 Merchant-Ivory production of E.M. Forster's *A Room With a View*, with its romantic shots of Florence and the surrounding countryside. However, it said that the vogue, which has coincided with the growing colonisation of Tuscany by British and other expatriates, was "getting out of hand".

Recent films which draw heavily on the rolling Tuscan landscape for their success include Bernardo Bertolucci's *Stealing Beauty*, Kenneth Branagh's version of *Much Ado About Nothing* and Jane Campion's film of *Portrait of a Lady* by Henry James.

Franco Zeffirelli is about to start shooting *Ten with Mussolini* near San Gimignano. Mel Gibson, meanwhile, is scouting for locations in and around Siena for his next film.

Residents of Pienza, created by Pope Pius II in the 15th century, seem pleased with the image of their town in *The English Patient*. A spokesman for the town council said there had been "some differences" over "alterations" to the town's buildings for filming, but these disputes were "forgotten". Instead, the Pienza authorities are planning to convert the monastery of Sant'Anna in Camprena, in which Juliette Binoche tends to her dying patient, into a country hotel.



Binoche: adding to the focus on Tuscany

Bosnian orphans forced to return home

Tears shed as Germany rounds up the first of 325,000 rejected refugees

FROM DEBORAH COLLCUTT IN BONN

THE return yesterday of a group of Bosnian orphans to their homeland signalled the official start of Germany's mass forced repatriation of hundreds of thousands of refugees. The 31 children, some as young as five, flew back to Sarajevo from Berlin after month-long delays during which the authorities and aid agencies argued about their future.

The children were granted a reprieve in October — a day before they were due to return to Sarajevo — after a German politician appealed for them to be spared a harsh winter in Bosnia and to allow time for the conditions of the Dayton peace accord to take full effect.

There were emotional scenes yesterday as the children were collected from orphanages around Magdeburg in eastern Germany, where they have lived since their dramatic evacuation from Sarajevo five years ago.

Orphanage staff and teachers from the local school and kindergarten wept as the children were rounded up and put on a bus for Berlin airport and a mid-morning flight.

In the past three weeks the children have been missing from normal lessons. Instead they have been receiving intensive tuition in their mother tongue and spending hours with child psychiatrists, in an effort to prepare them for the return.

The children were saved from the intense fighting of Sarajevo in 1992 by two local politicians and brought to

Germany. Two babies were killed by sniper fire during the evacuation and the rescue mission was heavily criticised by the German Government and the United Nations refugee agency.

For the next three weeks the children will be cared for by German aid workers in Sarajevo but, because of the chronic shortage of accommodation, there is concern that in the long term they could become homeless.

The same plight awaits all 200,000 refugees Germany intends to repatriate by the end of this year. It is part of a federal programme which Bavaria began before the winter, ignoring critics who claimed the state government's promise of sufficient accommodation and stability in the area was misleading.

Despite international condemnation, Bavaria has sent back dozens of refugees since the Government announced it would begin the "staggered" forced repatriation of the country's 325,000 Bosnians in October.

Germany accepted more refugees than all other European nations combined, which has taken an enormous toll on the cash-strapped federal and regional governments, especially Bavaria where about 65,000 Bosnians live.

But Klaus Kinkel, the Foreign Minister, last night rejected accusations that Germany was acting irresponsibly in beginning the official repatriation, which applies to single people and childless



Orphans hold on to their toys in Berlin yesterday as they await a flight home to Sarajevo. The children had lived in Germany for five years

couples from April 1 and will be extended to include families with children at the beginning of next month.

"We will be just as humane in sending the refugees back as we were in taking them in," Herr Kinkel said.

"This is about people who, in some cases, have lived in Germany for very many years

— we won't just mechanically send them back overnight," he added, contradicting media reports in Munich and Berlin that groups of refugees — including pregnant and elderly women — have been arrested and forced to board aircraft without any notice or time to pack their belongings. The United Nations High

Commissioner for Refugees once again appealed to Bonn yesterday not to judge repatriation cases based on records collated in Germany but on the stability of the homeland region and the availability of accommodation there.

About a third of the Bosnian refugees living in Germany are Muslims who come from

regions under Serbian control. "According to our information, hundreds of thousands of refugees from various states have to be housed in Bosnia this year," said a spokesman for the UN refugee agency. "Instead of the necessary 50,000 apartments, there are only about 13,000 standing."

Baerbel Bohley, the Commissioner for Help for Bosnia, also issued a warning against introducing hasty repatriation programmes. "A disorganised deportation of the refugees would be a catastrophe," she said. "The net, which the refugees might be caught up in, is so thin that it will tear under the force of deportation."

Strikes hit French airline as Europe opens skies to rivals

FROM SUSAN BELL IN PARIS

BESIEGED by striking ground staff and pilots, Air France Europe barely managed to limp into the Continent's new "open skies" yesterday as the European Union deregulated its airspace to encourage competition.

The state-owned airline was forced to cancel most morning flights from Orly airport, Paris, as staff protested against its merger with Air France, leaving passengers temporarily stranded after the Easter holiday weekend. Only a few shuttles to Marseilles, Nice and Toulouse were operating normally.

Air travellers were also hampered yesterday by a one-day strike by staff at Aeroports de Paris, the city's airport authority. The strike against planned job cuts caused delays in baggage handling and blanked-out flight information screens. Over the weekend air travel was also severely disrupted when most Air France Europe flights were cancelled because of a strike by ground staff.

Anne-Marie Idrac, the junior Transport Minister, said she was appalled by the strikes since it jeopardised the state airline's future as French airspace opened up to competition under the European "open skies" policy. France has the lion's share of Euro-

pean air travel, carrying more than 20 million passengers a year, although its airlines are plagued by labour disputes.

Yesterday's strike was the latest in a series of protests over plans to restructure the airline ahead of its merger with Air France. The industrial action was timed to coincide with a key step that Air France took yesterday towards the merger by leasing the domestic carrier's activities and staff.

The merger is due to be completed in September. Staff at Air France Europe, formerly Air Inter, are unhappy at proposals to bring their more generous pay and working conditions into line with those of their new parent company. Their unions cite a lack of negotiation as a key reason for the industrial action. The management of Air France maintains that the more lucrative terms need to be adjusted to match more closely with those of lower-cost competitors such as British Airways.

Air France plans to capitalise on the "open skies" ruling by introducing a domestic service in Britain, possibly in partnership with Jersey European. On May 5 the airline will challenge the German airline Lufthansa by launching a Frankfurt-to-Berlin service.

Boat tragedy splits Italy over protection force

FROM RICHARD OWEN IN ROME

ITALY was deeply divided yesterday over its well advanced plans for military intervention in Albania, with opposition politicians and military commanders urging a last-minute delay in deployment of the Italian-led "protection force".

Professor Romano Prodi, the Prime Minister, insisted it would go ahead as planned within the next two weeks "because Albania needs Italian help in its tragic crisis".

But *La Repubblica* gave a warning that what had started as a humanitarian mission welcomed by the Albanians had been transformed into a high-risk operation by the sinking of an Albanian refugee boat on Good Friday. The boat collided with an Italian corvette trying to stop "illegal immigration" to Italy.

Tirana claims that nearly 100 refugees, many of them women and children, were drowned. Angry Albanians, especially in Vlore, from where the boat set sail — blame Italy for the accident, and rebels have threatened to shoot any Italian troops who land at Albanian ports to escort humanitarian convoys.

Beniamino Andreatta, the Defence Minister, told the defence and foreign relations committees, meeting jointly in the Senate yesterday, that Albanian naval experts had



An Albanian throws explosives into the sea at rebel-held Vlore's harbour to catch fish

been asked to join an inquiry into the disaster. He said the corvette was moving alongside to order the Albanian boat to turn back when the vessel suddenly swung into the Italian ship's path, making collision inevitable. The boat had been stolen from Sarande two days earlier by criminals running an illegal immigration racket, he said.

Signor Andreatta later met Shagrir Vukaj, the Albanian Defence Minister, to discuss Friday's tragedy and plans for the intervention force to be drawn from Italy, Spain, Greece and other southern European nations. France yesterday confirmed it would contribute 1,000 troops to secure Durres and establish a "corridor" for supplies from the port to Tirana. Defence officials from the proposed force and the Western European Union met in Rome today to complete plans.

But Admiral Guido Venturoni, Chief of the Defence Staff, said there was a risk that the "small amount of hope" which existed for getting aid to Albania under military protection had been compromised.

Attempts to reach cross-party unity over the crisis collapsed when Signor Prodi accused Silvio Berlusconi, the media tycoon and leader of the right-wing Opposition, of cynically exploiting the refugee tragedy. Signor Berlusconi went to Brindisi on Monday, fearfully embracing survivors of the sea tragedy on television.

□ Tirana: Bashkim Fino, the Albanian Prime Minister, went to the rebel-held South yesterday for the first time since insurgents seized the region and told their leaders that the Shik secret police had been disbanded. (Reuters)

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WORLD IN BRIEF

Camera catches killer policemen in Brazil

Rio de Janeiro: Nine Brazilian policemen have been arrested after being filmed by an amateur cameraman as they robbed and beat three men with batons and killed two of them with shots in the head from close range (Gabriella Gamini writes). The violent scenes were broadcast on national television here yesterday.

The policemen were filmed stopping cars at random near the shanty town of Diadema, on the outskirts of São Paulo. One victim was made to kneel before he was killed. The shots were fired by a military police cadet known as "Rambo". Brazil's Justice Minister, Nelson Jobim, announced an inquiry into "human rights violations" and said: "These nine policemen will receive exemplary punishment."

140 die in Hutu rebellion

Bujumbura: At least 140 people have been killed in the past week in clashes between government troops and Hutu rebels in southern Burundi, an army spokesman said. Major Mamert Sinaruzi said the army had sent a team to the province of Bururi to investigate. Later, Lieutenant Isaac Nibizi, the chief army spokesman, said on state television that aircraft had been sent to put down the violent clashes. Military officials said that Hutu rebels killed five people in the Kinshama neighbourhood of Bujumbura late on Sunday. The victims were reported to be the Hutus who had recently returned from refugee camps outside the city. (AP)

Bad drivers to be flogged

Abu Dhabi: Ras al-Khaimah, a small Gulf emirate, believes it has found the solution to its chronic problem of bad driving — public flogging or ten days in jail. "Violators of the traffic rules will be flogged in public at the mosque nearest to their houses," a local newspaper reported. Police said up to 50 lashes would be given to anyone deliberately violating traffic rules, driving badly, ignoring red lights or driving without a licence. "Some young men do not give a damn for traffic rules and our previous punishment of imposing fines has been futile," a police officer said. (AFP)

Escaped tiger spurns dinner

Ottawa: Raw chicken was spread over snow-covered fairways at a golf course yesterday to tempt Zarak, an escaped four-year-old Siberian tiger, who has been on the loose for two days in Barrie, Ontario. Police wanted to get a shot at him with tranquilliser darts, but Zarak stayed in hiding (Richard Cleroux writes). The lost tiger was being transferred, with his mother, from a wild animal sanctuary to the Bear Creek Exotics Park when he hopped a fence and fled to the safety of a thicket next to the nearby golf course.

Bomb destroys tsar's statue

Moscow: A bomb has destroyed the Russian capital's only monument to the country's last tsar, Nicholas II, right. The Federal Security Service said: "The explosion was carried out in a very professional way. Practically nothing is left of the monument." The 32ft bronze statue was erected in a remote spot in northeast Moscow last year, reflecting continued official uncertainty about the Royal Family, murdered by the Bolsheviks in 1918. (Reuters)



Beijing attacks Gingrich

Hong Kong: The statement by Newt Gingrich, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, that the United States would defend Taiwan if China tried to retake it by force, was condemned by Beijing yesterday as "interference" (Jonathan Mirsky writes). The Foreign Ministry said China preferred peaceful reunification, but would take "other measures" if Taiwan declared independence or foreign forces intervened.

Britons get dressing down

Rotterdam: Police resolved a "cultural misunderstanding" after about twenty young Britons stripped naked amid picnicking Dutch families on a riverside path. They "thought it would be acceptable to stroll around in their birthday suits," the police said. Local people objected, the police were called and the young people dressed hastily and left by taxi. (Reuters)

Disaster train 'was doing 85mph in 20mph zone'

PAUL WHITE/AP

FROM GILES TREMLETT IN MADRID

SPANISH investigators yesterday were picking through the wreckage of two express passenger trains to discover the causes of two derailments that claimed at least 30 lives on Monday night.

Doctors working at the site of the worse of the two derailments, at Huarte Araquil in the northern province of Navarre, said that the high-speed accident had been so violent that it was impossible to determine whether they had extracted 18 or 19 bodies from the wreckage.

Javier Sevillano, for the state rail company Renfe, said that the train had been travelling at 85mph at a point where the speed limit was 20mph. The driver had survived the accident and was being questioned by the police.

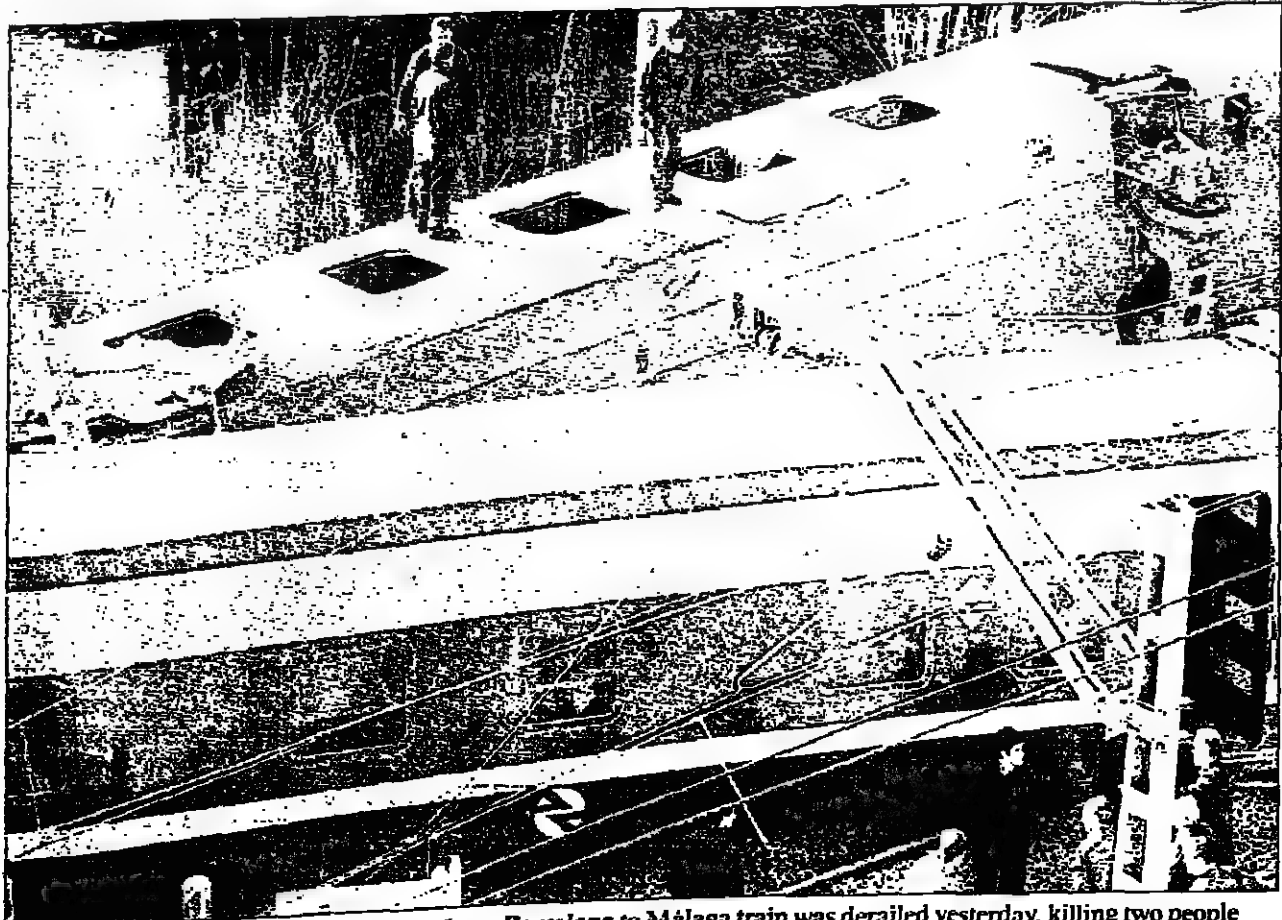
Police officers did not release the names of the dead yesterday, but said the youngest victim had been 13. Twelve of the 97 people injured were still in intensive care at hospitals in Pamplona, 20 miles from the crash. Another 30 people were being treated for lesser injuries. The

four-carriage inter-city train had been travelling from Barcelona to Irún on the French border and was packed with people returning from the Easter holiday.

In the second derailment, Josephine Lambert, 63, a French tourist, and a Spanish railway employee were killed when their night train from Barcelona to Málaga came off the tracks at Azuqueca de Henares, in the central province of Guadalajara. Twenty people were injured. Officials said it was too early to say what had caused the accident, although a points failure may have been to blame.

The second accident happened early yesterday while most of the 54 passengers travelling from Barcelona to Málaga were asleep in couchettes.

Embassy officials in Madrid said that Renfe had reported that no British people had been travelling in either train. Rafael Arias Salgado, the Development Minister, ruled out terrorist sabotage as a possible cause of either accident.



Workers prepare to clear the tracks after a Barcelona to Málaga train was derailed yesterday, killing two people

A blot on the image

Dior is displeased with the bare-faced chic of its leading lady

The French actress Emmanuelle Béart is said to be on the brink of losing her lucrative cosmetics contract with Christian Dior.

The problem is that Ms Béart, 30, has emerged as one of the leading campaigners against France's immigration laws, and while the company does not object to her adopting humanitarian causes, it would rather she did so in full make-up.

Ms Béart, however, has a style all her own. When protesting, she favours swampy-style jumpers, unbrushed hair and thong necklaces. The only fashionable "look" she has adopted is the new trend for red eyes, and this she has achieved by crying rather than applying copious amounts of expensive eyeliner.

While Dior might hope for Paris Match spreads of Ms Béart looking resplendent at some charity ball or other, it instead gets news coverage of her leading anti-government marches without so much as a trace of lipstick.

The alleged disgruntlement of Bernard Arnault, head of LVMH, the conglomerate that owns Dior, has now gone public. As the French magazine *Voici* puts it: "What does Dior have against Emmanuelle? An accumulation of little things which mean that she no longer conforms to the brand name's chic image."

One cannot help feeling that Dior should count itself lucky that the star of *Manon des Sources* and *Mission Impossible* has ever conformed to its image at all. It is almost a law of nature that, once given a cosmetics contract, an actress will do or say something quite at odds with the image. Even Elizabeth Hurley, who appears more determined than most to please her employer, Estée Lauder, was scuppered by the nocturnal

activities of her boyfriend Hugh Grant. Just as the ink was drying, he was preparing to cruise Sunset Boulevard.

But the real problem with signing up actresses is that they will never admit to wearing make-up. When Helena Bonham Carter signed her contract with Yardley, she came out with an unscripted line that must have infuriated the marketing men. "I'm not really into make-up," she announced. "Well, I haven't been hitherto. My mum used to use the lavender soap. And I had a Yardley bubble bath last night."

Béart gave a similarly ringing endorsement to her product when asked recently if she wore perfume: "Very rarely. I like to be natural. I like the smell of skin."

The trouble with actresses is that they have an image of their own, which they tend to create in opposition to whatever is going on around them. They like to be anti things. Sometimes they will centre on major things such as

human rights violations, but in idle moments they will home in on more minor oppressions — the pressure on women to stay svelte and fresh-faced.

While models will accept the image given to them — Kate Moss is Calvin Klein — actresses cannot quite grasp the notion of slavish promotion. Once a script is taken away they have an alarming tendency to want to be themselves. And they have usually spent much time working out exactly what that entails.

Being true to oneself, doing what one believes in, are the mantras of the acting fraternity. The idea that as one does this one might wear Dior's new mascara for hair — the latest product that stacks the hair — is not a notion that comes easily.



Grace Bradberry

Trolley dollies

Used to be for little old ladies, but now pushing a trolley is the only way to be seen shopping, says Style Editor Grace Bradberry



Shopping trolley, £25 by Daring Designs, 21, Finch Road, Old Compton Street, W1

The single trolley, £24.95 from The Holding Company, Kings Road SW3. Clements Ribeiro polo dress, £445 at Koh Samui, Monmouth Street, W2. shoes, £186 by Gira, Sloane Street, SW1

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Bless their little cotton socks

Frill-seekers will indulge their whims even if you ban Barbie

Perhaps it takes the moral zeal and ponderous discipline of the reformed heroin addict, but I, without such advantages, have given in to the inevitable. I am talking about Courtney Love's decision, which I read about in this month's *Vogue*, to ban Barbie dolls, frilly socks and topknots from her four-year-old daughter.

Every inch of burning rhetoric of my Millet-inspired militant youth, every centimetre of reasoned, more assimilated feminist argument since, is as nothing. For I have a daughter, a year younger than Courtney Love's, whose cooing embrace of all things girly is undeniable. Ban Barbie dolls, frilly socks or topknots? I wouldn't dare.

I'm not sure that I would



Nigella Lawson

want to. First, I don't think that sort of policing can ever work. I work on the principle that if one doesn't make an issue out of more or less anything — dolls, dresses, sweets, whatever — it will never become one. Secondly, I have had to accept that many of the characteristics I used to believe were the result of a sexist society were prompted by nature.

When my daughter was born, I never expected that before she was a year old she would be yearning for a "baby" (a doll in the guise of same) and a little buggy to push it around in. And this enthusiasm seems to be universal among female infants. If my friends' daughters are anything to go by, for they all seem to go through the same stages: next came, with a passion worthy of Dame Barbara Cartland, the pink phase, then the refusal to wear anything but dresses, and then the obsession with weddings.

At first I took the line that such behaviour was innate: the feminine really does express itself thus. I concluded, but I began to notice something else, too. Mothers who shrug their shoulders in paradoxical ruefulness when their daughters move into Barbie-mania have one thing in common. We have all at some time disclaimed that particular kind of girliness. And I can't help thinking that as we condemn those infantile displays of 1950s womanhood, decorative and super-domestic, so we take an illicit pleasure in them. I think there

is a certain vicarious thrill in all that unashamed girliness, the ribbons, the hairbands, the pink dresses, that pretiness. Even if it doesn't offend us politically (in the feminist sense), it cannot but assault our aesthetic sensibility. I mean, have you seen the Polly Pocket trainers? Purple-and-pink-trim dolly — or should I say Polly? — enclosed in its own little heart-shaped capsule on the side. Hideous. But the lure is definitely still there. And it is the stronger for the fact that many women of my generation have resisted it, or, more to the point, repressed it.

It is as if we are letting our daughters express all that forbidden saccharine femininity for us, perhaps even willing them to. (Not that I have ever quite eschewed the business of the feminine myself, nor felt obliged so to do.) In theory, I am opposed to Barbie and all her pomps. But the truth is that I long for my daughter to move into that phase. Hypocrite that I am, as I walked through the toy floor of a department store the other day, I began to rail wearily against the racks upon racks of minuscule outfits and the hair-swirling dollies for which they were designed. It wasn't until we reached the end of the display that I owned up, even to my surprise, that I was just itching to get my fingers on them. I can't wait.

Times have changed since the 1970s, when women thought that the way to equality was by apeing men: far from seeming a feminist perspective, that now appears to be essentially misogynistic. There is no shame attached to the female, the feminine. And yet, I think we should be wary of opposite claims, too.

By that I mean the Spice Girls, early Madonna, the myth of post-feminism: all that gumph about showing your knickers being an essentially feminist statement. Of course, I found it ridiculous when I was told once (by a man) that wearing eyeliner meant that I couldn't be a feminist. Even when I was more disposed even to want to believe that we were all victims of a patriarchal plot, I wasn't prepared to look the part. And yet, I do see the logic. Today's version of the feminist, all high heels, red lips and see-through shirt, seems to be an intellectually impure creature by comparison.

As I am myself. For much as I may want to tut-tut at the ideologically unsound, I am also almost as taken by my daughter's Disney video of *Cinderella* as she is. For underneath all of us, be we ever so tough or briefcase-bound, it would appear that there is still a part that wants to be whirling around a ballroom in a sparkly dress.

Still, better to acknowledge that and move on. In believing that by banning Barbie she can banish what she represents, Courtney Love is deluding herself and her daughter. But then, it's such self-delusion that makes her want to do it in the first place.

Time was when the clocks went forward, you just put your clock forward. Not any longer. Now that microchip technology has made it possible very cheaply, anything that can take a clock has one.

In our house we had to move 23 clocks forward: one on the oven, one on the microwave, the ones on two televisions, two video recorders, three remote controls, two computers, one fax machine, three telephones, an answering machine, two burglar alarm keypads, one stereo, two alarm clocks and two watches.



MARGARET McDONAGH: Labour election co-ordinator — scourge of dissenters



ALASTAIR CAMPBELL: Blair's press secretary — broods over Labour glamour boys



PATRICK ROBERTSON: Goldsmith PR, party animal



CATHERINE FALL: Tory Euro officer

The glamour girls and boys

An intervention by Baroness Thatcher in the political baffle yesterday, like a goddess favouring feeble mortals in the Trojan War, was a potent reminder of how a glamorous blonde can make even the dreariest election come alive.

The intervention of Sir Edward Heath was, however, a truer reminder of the image politicians project. Ted is the unacceptable face of Conservatism in all its liver-spotted, overfed and undersexed glory. Even if he now represents little else, he does at least signify how distant the worlds of politics and glamour appear to most voters.

That impression is, of course, only reinforced by the parade of suits at press conferences and the lame attempts by Mantovani men to appropriate Lightning Seeds lyrics

They're spin-doctors with sex appeal. Michael Gove on the election bratpack

or Spice Girls hook lines. And yet, behind the scenes are graduates of Generation X, who know their Pulp albums from their *Pulp Fiction*.

There are switched-on spin doctors of both sexes, but while the boys are happy to preen, the glamour girls hate to be thought of as such. The women of new Labour, in particular, loathe to be seen making their generation or gender an issue — but they needn't worry, their party has

already done that for them. The women-only shortlists which the NEC can still impose, and the guaranteed seats on the NEC itself, create a women's refuge from all-out electoral competition. Within the support structure, however, new Labour entirely lives up to its meritocratic rhetoric. With no room for failure, there is no space for second-best.

The ascendancy of Margaret McDonagh, general elections co-ordinator, in Millbank Tower attests to that. Although she would balk at the suggestion that she was anything other than a political mechanic, her icy air of command has won her admirers among her juniors. "She appeals to the socialist need to be bossed," explained one cynic. Labour's glamour boys are

overshadowed by the brooding presence of Alastair Campbell, the leader's press secretary. Millbank moles have noted that he wanders round with shirt buttons undone, gilet-style. The Tom Jones turn has few emulators, partly because the key new Labour garment is a waistcoat cut so high it can resemble your granny's cardigan, but also because overt displays of

masculinity are neither Nineties or new Labour.

Laddishness is, however, de rigueur at Tory Central Office, where breeding, in both senses, matters. While the boys tend to be loaded meets P.G. Wodehouse, the girls are all real Wooster women. The most accomplished Conservative coquettes, such as Catherine Fall and Rachel Whetton, all come from

thoroughbred stables like Cobham and Roodean.

The real home, however, of youthful glamour in politics is the Referendum Party, where Jimmy Goldsmith's personal PR Patrick Robertson presides over a harem of girls in Gucci. It's a pity for politics that the polls suggest the party will, like the labels its activists wear, be taken to the cleaners very shortly...

LEADERS OF THE PACK

MARGARET McDONAGH

Labour's election co-ordinator, age 36. A mother figure for Blair's boys? Only if your mum's Ma Baker. She's the she-wolf who suckles the rowellers of the rapid rebuttal unit and slaps down dissenters. Is this woman's place in the House? Possibly, but her sister Siobhan is a better bet. Margaret is more likely to wield influence from outside. Nurturing talent? And suffocating it. Her job after victory would be keeping the party in line with the leadership: toeing the line will be more important than talent.

PATRICK ROBERTSON

Personal PR for Sir James Goldsmith, age 28. A true Brit — just like Jimmy? Patrick's Latin looks owe something to a Roman childhood and a little to duty-free grooming products, but his parents are Scots. Does that make him more dour devil than daredevil? Not at all. In Annabel's more often than the owner, Patrick is such an accomplished socialite people now ask Goldsmith to introduce them to Patrick. So not a serious figure? Quite the opposite. Few are closer to Jimmy than Patrick.

CATHERINE FALL

European Policy Officer, Tory Central Office, age 28. Another little Englander? Hardly. She was educated in Strasbourg and has a half-Italian boyfriend. How can she cope with Central Office? Admirably: a diplomat, she learnt early how to deal with difficult customers. Although Euro-moderate, she counts sceptics as friends. Are all her friends politicians? Emphatically not. As likely to be dining with Howard Davies from the Bank of England as a grande dame of ballet.

HOW TO TELL THEM APART

New Labour:

Drink: Sea Breeze/Hoegaarden beer.
Bar: Oxo Tower, Soho House.
Men's suit: Agnes B. single breasted.
Women's dress: Jigsaw suit, square-toed shoes.
Men's haircut: French crop, off the brow.
Women's haircut: Power bob.
Most likely to say: "Why don't you bring your partner?"
Least likely to say: "You know what I hate about Tony?"

Young Tory:

Drink: Bloody Mary/Guinness.
Bar: Young's pubs, Chelsea wine bars.
Men's suit: Pinstripe from Hackett.
Women's dress: Cashmere and snaffled flanes.
Men's haircut: Eton fringe, flopping.
Women's haircut: Lacrosse-pitch length and Alice band.
Most likely to say: "What's the talent like?"
Least likely to say: "You know what I admire about Brian?"

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TSB	12.9%	£116.33	£5,583.84	£2,000.00
Barclays	12.9%	£114.68	£5,504.64	£2,000.00
NatWest	12.9%	£112.78	£5,419.44	£2,000.00

SEE HOW WE COMPARE				
Bank	APR	48 Monthly Payments	Total Amount Paid	Direct Loan Saving
RB Direct	12.3%	£105.66	£5,071.68	£2,000.00
Barclays	12.9%	£100.69	£4,833.12	£2,000.00
TSB	12.9%	£107.40	£5,155.20	£2,000.00
NatWest	12.9%	£104.27	£5,004.96	£2,000.00

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Alan Coren



■ And in the gardens of Arcadia my ego was supplanted

Was it or was it not an exemplary Easter Monday? Was I or was I not intoxicated, high up on Hertfordshire's sunlit hummocked Ridgeway, by the palpably thrumming regeneration all about me, things spiritual and natural mystically intertwined as they were seasonally meant to be, God's Son in His heaven, and bees, birds and buds new-risen wherever I looked? With, at my feet, a thousand different flowers.

All for sale. Which was why I was there, traipsing the gravelled aisles of an enormous garden centre, keenly peering this way and that, my mudstained garden plan clutched in a blistered hand still smarting from the energetic preparation of the beds waiting back in Cricklewood, dug, turned, mulched, watered, and crying out, now, to be filled with stuff. What kind of stuff? All kinds. Nice tall coloured stuff at the back, nice middle-sized scented stuff in the centre, nice tidy edging stuff at the front, you know the type of thing, you've all done jigsaws.

But have you all done herbaceous borders? I had, until last weekend, not, and they turned out to be trickier than jigsaws; you haven't got a lid to guide you. True, I did have the mudstained plan, but mine is not a household name where horticulturalists foregather, and the mudstained plan just had these rough oblongs of pencilled bed on it, blotched out in coloured inks to indicate the different hues of all the stuff I thought I was after, most of which, unfortunately, had now mudstained together to give the impression that what I wished to create was a paradise of herbaceous khaki. Never mind, I had it more or less in my head. The problem was that I didn't have it more or less at my feet. I didn't have it at all at my feet, because when I said, a moment ago, that there were a thousand different flowers down there, what I should have said was that there were a thousand different things that would be flowers once they had come out. At the moment, what I had at my feet looked like a thousand little lettuce.

And then Roger appeared. I knew he was Roger, because there was a tag on his green dungarees. Roger wanted to know if he could help me. I replied joyfully that nobody could help me more, and I put him in the picture, insofar as pointing at an arrangement of shapeless khaki blobs may be said to constitute that, and Roger said: "Why not begin with a background of *Hilarious mucus*?"

Or something like that. Whatever it was, I knew at once that we were in serious trouble, because when I asked him what *Hilarious mucus* looked like, he asked me if I was familiar with, as I recall, either *Copius gingivitis* or *Cavelloni hysterica*. I told him I wasn't, and he looked a bit shaken, but tried to describe it, so I asked if it came in yellow, and it didn't, but *Polyphila hernia* did, he said, and would go very well with what he suggested I planted in front of it, which might have been *Dubius harmonium*, or then again might not. Either way, the ideal plant to complement it as a dwarf edger would be *Insidious virus*.

Now, I shouldn't have cared as much about any of this, felt half as dumb, grinned nearly as sheepishly, had I not been rather good at Latin. If, for example, Roger had wanted to know whether Caesar was about to march his forces expeditiously to new winter quarters on this side of the river and on that, I should have rattled off the answer instantly, and even, perhaps, gone on to sing of arms and the man who first from the shores of Troy came destined to an Italian exile; but he didn't. The Latin I had been rather good at was no good at all, here. I had been taught the wrong Latin. They should have made me study Caesar's *Gallic Rookery* and Virgil's *Herbaceous*.

I went home not long afterwards, with a lot of little lettuce in the boot of the car to stick in where Roger advised they should be stuck. God knows what'll come up, but that is not the point of this piece. I have written this piece because what we do know is coming up is an election, and since education is a core subject of it, I want to make a plea for Latin to be a core subject of that. Show me a candidate who stands for Latin, and I shall show him a vote. A dead language? Not if you want live plants, it isn't.



An old Tory fairy-tale

Peter Stothard reflects on Ramsay MacDonald, Tony Blair and Home Rule for the Isle of Wight

Overheard outside the British Museum on Easter Saturday: First Woman: "I don't mind Tony Blair but this devolution business is ridiculous. Do you remember that book we used to have at home, the one about the smoothie new Labour Prime Minister who wanted independence for Scotland and got kidnapped by suffragettes trying to stop a revolution on the Isle of Wight?"

Second Woman: "I've no idea what you're talking about. Eat your lunch."

Norman Davey's *Yesterday* is not a famous book — no more so now than in the year it was published, 1924, during Ramsay MacDonald's first and short-lived Labour Government. But a quick search in the bookshops of Bloomsbury confirmed that my fellow museum visitor had remembered it well. *Yesterday*'s hero is "indeed a smooth, unassuming, former public schoolboy, Charles Debenham, the premier of the Administration". Its subject is the effect on Britain of a left-wing government promising devolution. The parallels between the two Labour leaders are not exact — but neither are they exactly inexact.

We first meet Mr Debenham soon after his election victory when, already tired from the efforts of implementing his manifesto, he is taking a quiet holiday cruise on board the *First Lord* of the Admiralty's yacht. After lobster mayonnaise, cold chicken in aspic, iced watermelon and champagne cup, his host warns him of the risks of prime ministerial absence.

"Yes, but then nothing can happen. Nothing ever does happen in this bright little country. The administration is run entirely by Under Secretaries and heads of Departments. If you and I and the Cabinet were to go off, puff, like smokes, tomorrow, the country would go on just the same. Oh this is better than Downing Street. No deputations, no by-elections, no reporters and, thank God, no suffragettes."

Meanwhile on the Isle of Wight, a leading article in the *Rydal Herald* has a more radical message than the radical Prime Minister ever had in mind.

"Ireland has obtained National Independence; Ulster has obtained National Independence; the time has come to achieve the same for the Isle of Wight. *Veni, videri, vincere!* God Save The Liberator."

The rebels are confident.

"England will simply puff and snort for a few weeks and then give in. What else can she do with a Radical Government pledged to Devolution?"

The Left is elated. Home Rule will do more to implement the new government's programme than could ever be expected from the public schoolboy holiday-maker with a green chartreuse in one hand and a lobster claw in the other. As one demonstrator puts it:

"The first thing we've got to see passed is a Minimum Wage Bill. No employment under thirty bob a week. That's what I say. Hear, hear, cried one or two others."

Back in Downing Street, the Cabinet is growing restless.

"Morning, Neville. Is the Prime Minister back?"

"No, sir."

"I'm a bit early. I'll wait. Ah, there's Punch."

Lord Thrale picked up the paper, studying with some care a full-page caricature of himself as keeper of a white staff. He was Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

"I believe the Prime Minister's a hullo-nation. I don't believe there ever was a Prime Minister. It was merely a term we used, a symbol we employed to designate the pivot around which our policy revolved, an illusion that is now shattered." "How's the Eschequer?" asked the President of the Board of Trade. "Oh, it's somewhat, sort of, alive," said a call man with a hatched face, "despite the opposition in the Isle of Wight where they've ducked the Income Tax Collector, expelled the Insurance Act officials and publicly rejected the Budget Act. Why can't anyone get hold of Debenham?"

Reaction in Scotland, home to a large number of Debenham's Cabinet, is divided.

A small party looked favourably upon the Isle of Wight's independence as being a precedent the Scotland should adopt; but, by far the majority of Scotsmen were of the opinion that it was much more advantageous to govern England as well as Scotland, as they did then, than to govern Scotland alone, as they would on secession.



London positively seethes with the Isle of Wight question.

The *Evening News* devoted a whole page to a long and stirring battle poem by John Masefield, entitled *Blooded*. The *Times* came out with a leader entitled "Devolution and Democracy", the product of an under-secretary, an Oxford Dictionary and half a bottle of port, a masterpiece in the art of discussing the incredible in a manner such as would lead the reader to believe that such was a matter of everyday occurrence.

In Wales and Cornwall and the Isle of Man the spirit of devolution is spreading fast.

Truro was aflame; Bodmin was aflame... The disintegration of the British Empire was yet further increased by the coalition of the Channel Islands — Jersey, Guernsey, Alderney and Sark — into the Independent Federation of the Southern Isles.

As the author comments:

"The English, while peculiarly slow at adopting a new idea, yet, when once that idea is firmly rooted in their intelligence,

waste little time in carrying it out to its logical and ultimate conclusion.

Charles Debenham has been delayed at sea by the novel's sub-plot, in which the Prime Minister is kidnapped by militant suffragettes, the far Left of his day. This section involves the Radical hero escaping in washerwoman's clothes like a cross between Bonnie Prince Charlie and Mr Toad. Perhaps that is why my fellow visitor to the British Museum remembered it so well.

Once Debenham is back home in Downing Street, the electoral arithmetic looks grim.

He cursed an evil fate that had precipitated him into such a hornet's nest. Beside the full-blown crisis in the Isle of Wight there were four miniature crises awaiting disentanglement. And the process of entanglement meant, as the Prime Minister admitted pathetically, loss of votes.

He is even forced to offer the Isle of Wight revolutionary leader the job of Minister for Education. Only a timely plot-twist provided by a German spy saves the nation and the day.

The beauty of Davey's novel is not just its peculiar echoes for a Labour-Britain 73 years on; it is in the serendipitous way the plot unfolds. The mainspring of the action is not a massive desire by the people of the Isle of Wight for independence. The inflammatory editorial in the *Rydal Herald* is a joke played on a drunken editor by a visiting Fleet Street columnist. The island's Liberator is a friend of the columnist who needs an excuse to kidnap an unenthusiastic girlfriend. The rush to Home Rule is driven by the fear of one island town that the other will declare itself the capital first. Devolution in the air, through devious twists and happenstances, inexorably leads to demonstrations on the ground.

"How happy is the Opposition", continued Debenham. "I often remember the time when I was out of office. How unencompassed we were! How witty, how resourceful, how irresponsible! If they only give the leader of the Opposition five thousand a year, who would be Prime Minister?"

By the time that *Yesterday* appeared, published by Chapman & Hall at 7/6 net, the first Ramsay MacDonald administration was almost over. Norman Davey subtitled his book *A Tory Fairy Tale*.

The author is the Editor of *The Times*.

The killing fields are red again

Cambodia's culture of impunity, by

William Shawcross

The grenade attack on Cambodia's leading opposition party on Easter Sunday, which killed up to 19 people and left more than 100 wounded, is a catastrophe. It threatens to undo the UN peacekeeping process of 1991-93, once believed to be the most successful that the world has ever mounted.

Initial evidence suggests that the attack was approved at a high level in the coalition Government which the UN created. In the past two years, dozens of journalists and political leaders critical of the Government have been threatened, attacked or even killed. None of those responsible has been arrested, let alone punished. Yet at the same time, the Government has given pardons, with no questions asked, to leading figures in the decaying Khmer Rouge movement, which exterminated perhaps as many as two million people at the end of the 1970s. The message is that even the grossest human rights violations do not matter. A culture of impunity — in which those who murder on government orders go free, and everyone else is in fear — has been allowed to develop.

This attack was particularly brutal. About 160 people had gathered, legally and peacefully, to walk from the offices of the Khmer Nation Party, Cambodia's leading opposition party, to the National Assembly, to protest over the lack of rule of law in Cambodia. Usually police and soldiers mingle with and harass such a demonstration. On this occasion a squad of well-armed soldiers stayed about 200 yards away, evidently ordered to keep a safe distance. Close to the National Assembly building, Sam Rainsy, a former minister of finance who is now the leader of the Khmer Nation Party, addressed the crowd. At about 8.20am two grenades exploded close to him. His life was saved only because one of his bodyguards jumped on him and forced him to the ground. The bodyguard was killed.

Then two more grenades exploded at the back of the crowd, killing people trying to flee. Two men in civilian clothes, probably grenade-throwers, were seen running towards the group of soldiers, who allowed them to pass. A demonstrator who tried to chase them was stopped by the soldiers. In other words, the soldiers seem to have helped the murderers.

Dozens of policemen then cordoned off the area, but they did nothing to help the wounded. People were left in agony in the broiling sun on the street. According to Amnesty International, one woman "whose legs had been blown off" was eventually picked up by the police and thrown into the back of an open pickup truck, which was then driven off without securing the victim, who was almost thrown off the back. She was declared dead on arrival at one of Phnom Penh's hospitals. There are still scores of mutilated people in the hospitals; they are in torment because scarcely any of them have enough money for painkillers. Voluntary agencies are appealing for money and drugs to help them.

National elections are due next year, five years after the UN elections. Those were won by the royalist party, led by Prince Norodom Ranariddh, but the ruling former Communists under Hun Sen threatened a civil war if the UN tried to make them leave office. The UN was forced to accept a coalition with two prime ministers: Prince Ranariddh and Hun Sen. Of the two, Hun Sen, a former Khmer Rouge soldier whom the Vietnamese installed in power as leader of a Communist government in the 1980s, is the dominant personality. His behaviour is increasingly psychotic, threatening all who oppose him. He is one of the main targets of Sam Rainsy's public criticism of the "mafia state" in Cambodia. Rainsy's life is constantly threatened.

In the past 12 months the two Prime Ministers have competed to encourage Khmer Rouge defections. They want the former soldiers on their side in case political rivalry once more becomes civil war. Men such as Ieng Sary, the former Khmer Rouge foreign minister, have been given pardons, passports and money to defect to the Government side. No investigations of their crimes against humanity have taken place.

As a result of this culture of impunity, human rights violators are exempt from punishment. Some of those who helped the wounded in the grenade attack are said to be terrified that they will be punished for doing so.

The world is no longer watching. The British Government was effective in the 1993 election process, with a strong Ambassador, David Burns. Since then it has sat on the sidelines. So, more importantly, has the Clinton Administration, which has tragically ignored warnings from Amnesty and others.

Cambodia now needs the UN Security Council and other institutions such as the UN Human Rights Commission to turn their attention once more to the country. The international donors who supply almost half the national budget have both the responsibility and the means to put pressure on the Government. Cambodia is now a signatory of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and by chance is being discussed this week by the Human Rights Commission in Geneva. A strong resolution is called for.

No one expects Cambodia to be transformed overnight into a model democracy. But Hun Sen clearly believes that his men can without fear attack all who oppose him. He must be told it is not so. Otherwise the mentality of the killing fields will return.

The author has written extensively on modern Cambodia.

You said it

OLYMPIAN political figure she may be, but Baroness Thatcher is not averse to a spot of plagiarism to boost her cause. Yesterday, in *The Daily Telegraph*, she wrote of the "boneless wonder" of new Labour, asserting that parallels between her achievements and those of Tony Blair are false.

The phrase "boneless wonder" was used by Winston Churchill in the House of Commons in 1931 to

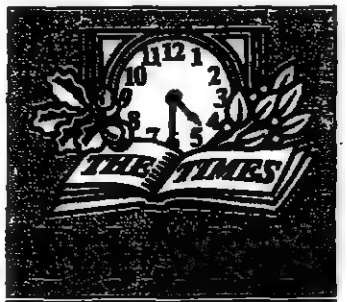
put Labour's Ramsay MacDonald in his place, yet the baroness made no acknowledgement of the debt in her pot-stirring piece.

"I remember, when I was a child, being taken to the celebrated Barnum's Circus, which contained an exhibition of freaks and monstrosities, but the exhibit... which I most desired to see was the one described as 'The Boneless Wonder', said Churchill.

"My parents judged that that spectacle would be too revolting and demoralising for my youthful eyes, and I have waited 50 years to see the boneless wonder sitting on the Treasury Bench."

In familiar company, Baroness Thatcher, who has just donated her papers to Churchill College to be shelved alongside Sir Winston's, regularly refers to "Winston" as though speaking of a friend, even though she is not known to have met him. Yesterday, her office applauded her use of the "boneless wonder" description. "Oh Lord no, she never claimed it as her own," said one of her staff. "A good expression sticks. Why not use it again?"

● The comet Hale-Bopp has made the eyebrow-raising astronomer



Patrick Moore so animated that he has been meditating on the potential benefits of nuclear bodies. "Although, Hale-Bopp, has no chance of hitting Earth," he said on return from an aeroplane flight to inspecter. "But praying for a comet to land on the European Parliament."

Going Dutch

THE CREAK of old brogues and the rustle of Burberry jackets are soon to be heard in sultry Beverly Hills alongside the chatter of ageing models with facelifts.

Holland & Hollie, purveyors of shotguns and country accessories to the Duke of Edinburgh and the Prince of Wales, are planning to open a California branch, squeezed in between Giorgio Armani and Ralph Lauren.

A stately two-storey granite

building has been chosen on Rodeo Drive, for the display of "traditional British craftsmanship created for field sports". There are no plans, as yet, to sell baseball caps in their Mayfair headquarters.

Brock's crocks

THE TIRED remains of Lord Brockton's car collection are being auctioned off at London's Olympia this afternoon. Brockton will be following the sale from — aptly enough — Ford prison, after his conviction for an insurance fraud, over his sports cars.

The sale, conducted by Brooks Auctioneers, will include two 1956

Maseratis, a 1967 Ferrari, and a dilapidated 1964 Oca — optimistically described in the catalogue as "ripe for completion". Together with spare parts, ranging from five-speed gearboxes to twin-choke carburetors, the collection is expected to raise £100,000.

Ruddy man

JOHN MAJOR's literary tastes have moved on from Trollope. He has expressed a weakness for Rudyard Kipling, and recently told Leeds University students that *The Ballad of East and West* (1889) is his favourite poem.

Although it fails to mention soap boxes, the poem does concern a one-to-one face-down — between a colonel's son and a bandit chief:

But there is neither East nor West, border, nor breed, nor birth, When two strong men stand face to face, though they come from the ends of the earth!

Life and limb

THERE is a remarkable diversity in the gyrations of the ballerina Sylvie Guillem. Last week, shortly after making her final curtain call in *La Bayadere* at Covent Garden, she was spotted hurling herself around a bouncy castle.

Risking dancing limbs that are



Guillem: risking all

admired by potentates the world over, Sylvie's enthusiastic leaps as a guest of the choreographer William Forsythe (who designed the vast vinyl fortress) must have been an insurer's nightmare.

Among those she encountered flailing about on the castle in the Roundhouse, Camden, was Nicholas Kenyon, the Controller of BBC Radio 3. "They talked very animatedly," says a Roundhouse bouncer. "The castle seems to inspire great familiarity."

Yesterday, sadly, neither ballerina nor Kenyon was available to elaborate.

P.H.S

Lending the mot juste



BLAIR'S BAIT

Follow me over to Labour, says the ex-Tory MP

One testament to John Major's "classless society" is the number of middle and upper-class people who currently intend to vote Labour on May 1. This may not have been the social fluidity that the Prime Minister had in mind when he set out one of his early visions for Britain: but, despite all the caveats that sociologists can find, class-based politics does seem at last to be dissolving.

Yesterday Tony Blair seemed to relish the symbolism of sharing a platform with Alan Howarth, the Conservative defector whom he has charged with encouraging and reassuring those of his background who are now considering their own jump from Tory to Labour. It is unclear so far how successful this tactic will be: Tories intending to vote Labour will not necessarily be swayed by the example of so blatant a turncoat. But even if Mr Howarth has no impact, the scale of those switching to Labour is already clear. Voters who deserted one of the main parties used to go as far as the Liberals and no further. Now, however, voters are moving straight across in droves. In the Wirral South by-election, it was the most significant factor. No longer is it shocking for people who have voted Tory all their lives to say that they intend to give Labour a chance.

The swing from Conservative to Labour since the last general election is greater among the so-called "ABs" — those in managerial and professional occupations — than among the rest of the electorate, according to our latest MORI poll. In April 1992, the ABs favoured the Tories over Labour by 53 to 25 per cent; now they prefer Labour by 39 to 36 per cent.

Class-based politics have been in a gradual decline since the 1960s. The last time that it was fashionable for the chattering classes to vote Labour was in 1966. But switches in the other direction were commonplace in the 1980s. It was one of Margaret Thatcher's great achievements

that she persuaded so many working-class and lower middle-class voters to support her. With the aid of policies such as council-house sales, she embodied their aspirations and helped to make them more prosperous than their parents. Now Mr Blair is trying to achieve the same for Labour: reaching out beyond traditional class support to lead a party, as he said yesterday, "behind which people from all walks of life, all classes, all parts of Britain can unite".

The fact that Baroness Thatcher and Mr Major came from relatively modest backgrounds helped to dispel the notion that the Tory party was only for the privileged. Mr Blair, set to be the first public-school educated Prime Minister from either party since Alec Douglas-Home, offers the same reassurance in reverse. If he, and indeed Mr Howarth, can feel comfortable in the new Labour Party, it is perhaps safe for others of their background to support.

Of course, policies are as important as people. Had Mr Blair acceded to Gordon Brown's desire to raise the top rate of income tax, he would have been sending the wrong signal to those whom Mr Howarth has been tasked to woo. Had he allowed his Shadow Education Secretary, David Blunkett, to levy VAT on private school fees, or kept John Smith's plan to lift National Insurance thresholds, then wealthier voters would have supported Labour only against their own deepest interests.

If Labour's conversion into a party for all the nation is genuine, it should be welcomed. Voters of all backgrounds should now be able to exercise genuine choice at elections, without the expectation that one half of society will be pitted against the other while each party is in power. The change will also accord with public desires. As long ago as 1970, Labour's private polls found that voters wanted a party that represented all classes. The message was so unwelcome that it was ignored.

RETHINK FOR ROME

The Albanian expedition should be stopped before it starts

Italy's proposal for military intervention in Albania has all the makings of a disaster. The international force now being hastily assembled with the lukewarm blessing of the United Nations appears to have learnt nothing from the last European attempt to enforce peace in the Balkans. As in Bosnia, there is no clear mandate, no chain of command or division of duties, no properly defined military task and no exit strategy. Unlike Bosnia, there is not even the pretext of international aggression: the force is wading into the Albanian imbroglio to confront not a political challenge or civil war but thieves, gangsters and opportunists.

Italy insists that its proposal to send in troops to guard the aid convoys is a humanitarian response to the calls for help from Tirana. Rome's truer motive is national self-interest. Having sheltered the first wave of refugees, Italy is now terrified at the prospect of an uncontrolled flood of destitute and ill-educated Albanians spreading across the country bringing new organised crime links in their wake.

The refugees, many admitting they are fleeing poverty rather than persecution, are now being sent home, with the Italian navy patrolling the straits to turn back the rusting wrecks in which thousands of desperate people are attempting to flee. As Lamberto Dini, the Foreign Minister, repeatedly insists, they will continue to stream out until conditions improve.

Some Italians are beginning to have second thoughts as the enormity of the undertaking becomes clear. The country has little experience and a mixed record in military operations. The last intervention in Albania, ordered by Mussolini on Good Friday, 1939, presaged a disastrous war, and memories of wartime ineptitude are still

deep. A more recent attempt to restore order in Somalia, another former colony, ended in catastrophe.

The Italian military has not decided the rules of engagement or the chain of command, and is already suggesting that conditions in Albania are too risky. Public support is volatile, the opposition is preparing to exploit the Government's unease and the Defence Minister's low profile hardly inspires confidence on the eve of today's meeting in Rome of allies in the force.

Italy is also chagrined that support for intervention has come only from "the olive belt" — those countries either directly affected by the crisis, such as Greece, those with historic ties such as Turkey and countries such as Romania keen to demonstrate its peace-keeping potential to Nato. Nato's immediate rejection of any military role and the refusal by the main troop-suppliers in Bosnia, Britain in particular, to take part has left many Italians uneasy. Their anxiety will be only partly relieved by the offer of 1,000 French troops.

What makes the entire operation problematic is that the mood in Albania itself has suddenly changed. The fatal collision of a refugee ship with an Italian naval vessel has provoked an outburst of hostility against a country that Albanians, in their naivety, believed would rescue them from their lawlessness and foreshadowed pyramid investments. Even the aid agencies now see troop escorts as a liability likely to make the convoys a target for bandits. Italy should reconsider. The operation can still be halted without losing face: the recent decision to call off the Canadian-led expedition to Zaire was a sensible response to changed circumstances. Things have already changed in Albania. Rome should change too.

ARCHERS ON TARGET

Grundy awakens the underdog instinct in us all

Anyone who was even half awake when an item about the battle between Eddie Grundy and Simon Pemberton began on the *Today* programme yesterday will have been startled into full attention by Anna Ford's description of Pemberton as "a bit of a shir". But the number of listeners blinking at her choice of words will have been far outweighed by those nodding in broad agreement. The most remarkable thing about the nation's latest obsession is not that Grundy and Pemberton are fictional: it is that so many are on the side of Grundy.

Pemberton owns the land on which, in Radio 4's *The Archers*, Grundy farms. Pemberton is well-spoken and rich; Grundy sounds like Walter Gollum reincarnate. Grundy has pulled himself together of late but for years he shuffled from disaster to catastrophe at the head of a dysfunctional family. He has been to farming what another Eddie, Edwards, became to downhill skiing, a compelling failure. To that extent he is the underdog in us all; but in the era of Douglas Hogg, BSE, cloned sheep, organophosphates and E. coli, Grundy may speak also to a shift in public opinion.

Grundy's ultimate battle with Pemberton, before a Lands Tribunal, began in last night's edition of *The Archers* and the denouement is likely on Friday. If, as we expect, Grundy wins, the outcome will break with the recent real-life trend: each of the last

three such cases has resulted in the tenant's eviction. A fictional outcome in favour of Grundy would, however, seem far more "real" to the listeners, who number nearly four million.

The long success of *The Archers* owes something to what Tom Wolfe once called "identifying the correct emotion". Television soaps may have sought audiences with tales of lesbians, gays, adulterers and murderers, and even *The Archers* has from time to time strayed down such paths. But the real modernity of *The Archers* lies in its gradual transition from a show designed to keep farmers abreast of agricultural trends to one which now keeps a sceptical urban population in touch with what Big Agriculture is up to.

The Grundy-Pemberton drama perfectly encapsulates this change. Little farmer against big landowner is a microcosm of shopkeeper against hypermarket, environmentalist against motorway, Third Division peasant against Premiership nobility. Eddie Grundy deserves to win this week in order to prove that the loveable rogue is alive and well. City-dwellers may not all think about the countryside very much; they may visit it sparingly; but we all want reassurance that its population includes people like the Grundys, all up to their ankles in the material of which Pemberton is a bit.

Reply to Labour's agenda for unions

From Mr Ian Lang, MP for Galloway and Upper Nithsdale (Conservative)

Sir, From Tony Blair's article on Labour's union agenda ("We won't look back to the 1970s", March 31) I can only conclude either that the Labour leader does not know the detail of Labour Party policy, or that his party is afraid to tell the electorate the truth.

For instance, Mr Blair claims that it is "wrong" to say that Labour would grant employees full employment rights from their first day. But according to Labour's chief employment spokesman, Ian McCartney, it is "total nonsense" to suggest Labour would not grant full employment protection rights to employees from their first day of employment (*Tribune*, June 29, 1996).

Mr Blair claims it is "false" to assert that Labour and the TUC are "to set up a new agency to oversee union recognition". According to Composite 13 on "Rights at work", as passed at the 1996 Labour conference, "a new 'Representation Agency' would have powers to award consultation rights to a union". This would have "both trade union and employer involvement".

Mr Blair claims to have "rejected the TUC proposals, which were for wider rights of representation". Again, in passing Composite 13, the 1996 Labour conference endorsed a policy requiring only 10 per cent of the relevant workforce to vote for statutory recognition. It has always been the case that Labour's policy is that which has been duly passed by the party's conference. If that is no longer the case, Mr Blair should say so.

Under new Labour there would indeed be a "striker's charter". Labour would allow strikers to claim unfair dismissal — a privilege never before enjoyed by the unions in Britain, even when Michael Foot was Employment Secretary.

On Wednesday we will set out our proposals on industrial relations which will protect the public from excessive strike action, in contrast to Labour's plans to give the unions the favours they have demanded.

Yours faithfully,
IAN LANG
(President of the Board of Trade),
House of Commons,
March 31.

Economics and voters

From Ms Mary Russell

Sir, I note that new Labour is pointing out warnings in yet another report by "experts" predicting economic pitfalls ahead (details, March 25).

I cannot help but think that if the Chancellor had listened to the pronouncements of such "experts" our present economic wellbeing would have foundered months ago.

There is one sure way to continue the present prosperity and avoid the predicted disasters: re-elect the Government, and with it a Chancellor who listens to his own finely-tuned instincts rather than to so-called experts or the equally uninspired pronouncements of new Labour.

Yours faithfully,
MARY RUSSELL,
5 Cedar Road, Sutton, Surrey,
March 25.

From Mr Maurice Fitzpatrick
Sir, You report (Election 97, March 25) on the manifesto of the Communist Party, which calls for an income tax rate of 50 per cent on incomes over £50,000.

In 1982-83, the last year of Lady Thatcher's first term, the top rate of tax on earned income was 60 per cent; this applied to income in excess of £31,500. Allowing for price inflation, the starting point for Lady Thatcher's 60 per cent top rate was broadly similar to the starting point for the 50 per cent top rate proposed by the Communist Party.

Furthermore, in 1982-83 unearned income could be taxed at up to 75 per cent: half as much again as the top rate now proposed by the Communist Party.

How far the debate on tax has moved. In the space of just 15 years, high marginal tax rates really do seem to have disappeared for good.

Yours faithfully,
M. C. FITZPATRICK
(Head of Economics),
Chantrey Vellacott (accountants),
Russell Square House,
10-12 Russell Square, W.C1,
March 25.

Business letters, page 29

Care of the elderly

From Mr Peter Orr

Sir, Put simply, the problem about caring for the elderly (letters, March 19) is that it offers no route to that "quick fix" which props up so many ministerial boasts about the effectiveness of the NHS. "X million patients treated last year" may sound impressive enough, but long-term care for the elderly spoils such figures.

Those of us who believe it to be a vital issue are obliged to go on repeating that in Britain today there really is such a thing as society, and that society owes a duty of care to its senior members.

Yours faithfully,
PETER ORR,
17 Berkley Drive,
Guisborough, Cleveland.

Homosexuality in the Armed Forces

From Mr Martin Bowley, QC

Sir, I note with some concern your reports of March 24 and 25 on the Army's attitudes to homosexuality, followed by today's letter from the Minister of State for the Armed Forces, Mr Nicholas Soames.

I recall the welcome and positive response only last week from the political and military leaders of the Ministry of Defence to the survey from the Office for Public Management, which found that racism is endemic in the Armed Forces (report, March 21). This was in striking contrast to their response a year earlier to the Homosexuality Policy Assessment Team's report (details, March 5, 1996). That document revealed a shocking degree of blatant and strident homophobia within the Armed Forces.

Outrageously homophobic quotations from serving men were included in the HPAT report to justify its conclusion that the ban on gays in the military should remain. At the time neither the Defence Minister nor any of the Chiefs of Staff appeared to be in any way embarrassed by the level of homophobia disclosed. As Michael Brown, MP, said in the course of the debate on the report "prejudice is prejudice, whether it is racial or sexual, and prejudice is wrong. It must be outlawed".

So far neither the Secretary of State for Defence, Mr Michael Portillo, nor Mr Soames, nor Sir Jack Slater, the Chief of Naval Staff, have provided the leadership required if the barracks culture of the forces is to begin to be changed to bring it into line with the culture of the rest of society.

Your report of March 24 that senior Army officers and top civil servants at the Ministry of Defence are drawing up a new code of moral conduct which would effectively remove the ban on homosexuals serving in the Armed Forces is to be warmly welcomed by all but the most prejudiced observers.

But I suspect that we must wait until after May 1 for the changes of personnel which alone can provide the necessary political impetus.

Yours etc,
MARTIN BOWLEY
(President,
The Bar Lesbian and Gay Group),
36 Bedford Row, W.C1,
March 26.

From Mr Ben Dunn

Sir, Nicholas Soames suggests in his letter that homosexual orientation or behaviour amongst service personnel would "risk undermining the combat effectiveness of our troops and their ability to meet the defence needs of the country".

I am at a loss to understand how the risk arises.

To deny this group of people the right to serve the nation is surely also to ignore the best interests of the nation.

Homosexuals have helped to ensure the efficacy of the British Armed Services for years. It is time this is recognised and their actions commended.

Yours faithfully,
BEN DUNN,
53 Byron Mews,
Fleet Road, NW3,
March 26.

Prejudice and care of the young

From Mr Brian Simpson

Sir, Mr A. P. Millard, the Headmaster of Giggleswick School (letter, March 27), asks what messages are being sent to young people and their parents by the Army's movement towards removing its ban on homosexuals and by the Scouts' decision to accept them as leaders.

The answer, I would suggest, is as follows: that prejudice is wrong, that human beings should be judged by their qualities and their behaviour and that all people are capable of being decent and moral.

I am sure these are messages which Mr Millard would applaud, and if he is not already sending them to his own pupils I trust that he will now make a start.

Yours sincerely,
BRIAN SIMPSON,
50 Milton Park, No.
March 27.

From Mrs E. M. Melody

Sir, I feel that Mr A. P. Millard may be confusing homosexuality and paedophilia. If he believes that a scout leader might, on account of his homosexuality, corrupt those in his charge he is equating a legitimate form of sexuality with sexual deviancy.

The danger of moral corruption is, furthermore, neither more nor less acute than that of a male heterosexual teaching a class of schoolgirls.

I fear for the pastoral care of pupils confused about their sexuality when a headmaster expresses such views under the banner "common sense and moral judgment".

Yours faithfully,
E. M. MELODY
(School Nurse),
The Manchester Grammar School,
Manchester M13 0XT,
March 30.

From Mr C. G. Linssen

Sir, If we can improve the selection of magistrates, why criticise the principle of the use of this quick and economic form of justice, and make victims and defendants wait longer and at greater cost for trial at Crown Court?

In order to appear to be fair, we should certainly aim to draw magistrates from a more representative cross-section of society. But perhaps the most significant influence on a magistrate is the general attitude of the specific bench to which he or she belongs; there is no proven correlation with his or her social background. More nuance and clarity are required in the application of selection criteria of "suitability" and "balance". Checks on uniformity in magistrates' procedural and sentencing policy need to be strengthened.

Jury quality, too, is dependent on effective selection. Women and ethnic minorities are under-represented on juries: a far greater concern, I would suggest, than their under-representation amongst magistrates.

Yours faithfully,
CLIVE LINSSSEN,
Langdale Hall,
The University of Manchester,
Upper Park Road,
Victoria Park, Manchester,
March 25.

London's traffic

From Dr Gabriel Alexander Khoury

Sir, In their letters of March 21, Dr Martin Cragg, of the Institution of Highways and Transportation, and Lord Berkeley, of the Railfreight Group, question the London Expressways' proposal for reducing surface traffic in London by means of a road tunnel network linking the motorways across and around the capital. They do so chiefly on the grounds of cost and the disruption to traffic that would be caused by the construction of the tunnels.

These obvious issues have, of course, been addressed by the team at Imperial College where London Expressways was conceived more than six years ago. Since then eight world-class companies, including Amec, British Telecommunications and Kvaerner, have supported the project. As the President of the Institution of Civil Engineers pointed out in his letter of March 11, it will significantly reduce long-distance vehicular surface traffic in London, while markedly improving access underground for essential vehicular trips.

Surface traffic will be restricted, enabling local authorities to reclaim streets for pedestrians, cyclists and bus services, resulting in significant

improvements to the surface environment, air quality and character of the city.

Improvements in public transport are essential, but it is a fallacy to assume that this alone will solve London's traffic problems.

Contrary to Dr Cragg's suggestion, the tunnels will not involve a significant disruption of services, as they will not use the "cut and cover" method but be bored deep beneath existing facilities. Disruption to the surface would be minimal for a project of this scale and certainly less than the disruption caused by the current upgrading of the North Circular road.

The tunnels need not only be radial; they could also be orbital, as in the case of the Paris and Stockholm projects.

The cost of the system, which will be complementary to public transport and integrated with it, would be more than recovered by tolls and by environmental, social and economic benefits.

Yours faithfully,
G. A. KHOURY (Project Director,
London Expressways),
Imperial College of Science,
Technology and Medicine,
Department of Civil Engineering,
Imperial College Road, SW7,
March 24.

Easter manifesto on a central truth

From Mr Philip A. C. Campbell

Sir, Your excellent leading article of Good Friday, "In Easter light", must surely be breaking new ground. There, in black and white, as fresh as the about-to-be-published party manifestos and in matter-of-fact terms, was the central statement of Christianity "that God so loved the world that He gave His only Son" — for Christians the central of all truths.

So why did I find it so strange to see it placed as a leading article, instead of gracing the ghetto of some Credo column? It was beautiful. It should surely have been surrounded by some acclaim. It is surely more important than "The Sun supports Labour". The Times supports God. Bravo! Encore!

I am, yours sincerely,
PHILIP A. C. CAMPBELL,
20 Ashchurch Terrace, W12,
March 27.

From Dr Hyam Maccooby

Sir, I am surprised that your leading article should repeat the old canard that for Jewish law, crucifixion "was evidence that the one who died was cursed by God". No such doctrine has ever existed in Judaism. Thousands of Jews died, like Jesus, by crucifixion because of their resistance to Roman imperialism, but they were regarded not as cursed but as martyrs.

The statement by Paul (Galatians iii, 13), "Christ bought us freedom from the curse of the law, by becoming for our sake an accursed thing: for Scripture says, Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree" is his own individual interpretation of Deuteronomy xii, 23, for which no parallel can be found in Jewish sources.

Even criminals who suffered capital punishment for their crimes were not regarded as thereby undergoing a curse, but on the contrary as gaining expiation for their sin (Yosef, Sanhedrin ix, 5). The rabbinic interpretations of Deuteronomy xii, 23 do not regard the curse as applying to the hanged person, but to the persons responsible for the hanging ("hanging" here means the public exposure of the corpse of an executed person overnight).

The sectarian Temple Scroll (64) appears to take the more primitive view that hanged persons suffer from a curse (if the hanging of the corpse is prolonged overnight), but only when they are guilty, not when they are innocent victims of oppression. Only Paul regards Deuteronomy xii, 23 as referring to some magical curse adhering even to an innocent person through hanging *per se*.

It is time that this idiosyncratic view should be attributed to its source, Paul, instead of being attributed to Judaism.

Yours faithfully,
HYAM MACCOOBY,
Leo Baeck College,
80 East End Road, N3,
March 30.

Seek and fail to find

From Mr John Murphy

Sir, Recent disclosures in *The Times* are tending to confirm to me the disquieting realisation that, by and large, my parents were probably as confused as I: my teachers as impulsive; my doctors as sick; my priests as sinful; my psychiatrists as tormented; my gurus as bewildered; and now, apparently, my politicians are as self-serving as myself.

Pray, Sir, whence should I seek good examples?

Yours sincerely,
JOHN MURPHY,
4 Sparrow House,
73 Cephau Avenue, E1,
March 29.

Travel made easy

From Mr J. F. K. Hinde

Sir, Together with Virgin Atlantic you published today an exclusive competition which offers the winner nights at the Sabi Sabi Private Game Reserve, including flights from Johannesburg "to the reserve, adjoining the Kruger National Park". But to win an entrant must first correctly answer the question "Sabi Sabi adjoins which National Park? (a) Serengeti (b) Kruger (c) Hwange".

Wow — that's a tough one.

Yours faithfully,
J. F. K. HINDE,
Ryder House,
Coppem Lane, Esher, Surrey,
March 29.

In every pie

From Sir Anthony Alment

Sir, Isn't it odd that while all these TV cooks seem to use their fingers for everything (recently I saw one of them even mixing a drink with a podgy digit), we ourselves are constantly being urged to pay strict attention to food hygiene?

Yours faithfully,
ANTHONY ALMENT,
Winston House,
Boughton, Northampton,
April 1.

Letters should carry a daytime telephone number. They may be faxed to 0171-782-5046.

TODAY	AM	HT	PM	HT	TODAY	AM	HT	PM	HT
London Bridge	09.12	8.4	21.45	8.9	Little	19.20	4.5	23.13	4.6
Aberdeen	09.12	8.4	22.12	9.5	Liverpool	08.45	7.7	19.30	7.8
Acronmouth	02.00	10.3	14.54	10.4	Glasgow	08.20	7.5	17.50	7.6
Belfast	08.36	3.0	19.20	2.9	Margate	07.25	5.4	20.02	5.9
Bristol	01.55	9.6	14.40	9.7	Newport Haven	01.27	5.4	16.15	5.5
Dunfermline	02.04	4.5	13.16	4.4	Newry	09.26	5.5	18.15	5.6
Durham	08.36	5.5	19.20	5.6	Oman	01.46	3.0	24.29	2.8
Falmouth	07.32	3.5	20.29	3.6	Pennance	—	—	12.29	6.3
Glasgow (N Wally)	—	—	12.47	4.2	Perth	01.19	1.4	18.40	1.5
Greenock	07.04	2.8	20.30	2.6	Pontarmout	08.53	1.4	18.40	1.5
Hull	05.57	3.4	19.45	3.3	Sharnbrook	06.41	5.7	19.24	6.1
Holyhead	05.45	4.6	13.01	4.6	Sherburn	06.16	5.5	19.24	6.1
Hill (Albert D)	01.31	7.2	14.05	7.2	Swansea	01.45	7.5	14.20	7.6
Ipswich	01.08	7.2	13.54	7.1	Tees	11.24	—	—	—
Kings Lynn	01.43	5.1	14.14	5.1	Wabon-on-Sea	07.12	—	19.45	3.4

All times GMT Heights in metres

East coast	South coast	London 7.30 pm to 6.32 am
6.34 am	7.36 pm	Bristol 7.45 pm to 6.41 am
		Edinburgh 7.55 pm to 6.56 am
West coast	North east	Manchester 7.46 pm to 6.59 am
12.03 pm	3.45 am	Pontarneau 7.56 pm to 6.55 am

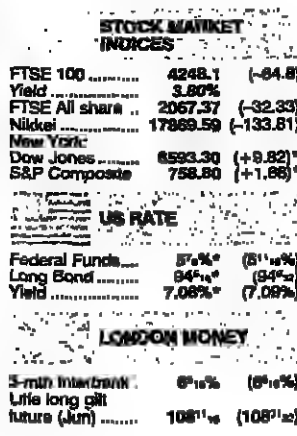
Last quarter today

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**TELEVISION
AND
RADIO
PAGES
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BUSINESS TODAY



Analysts said it showed that the authorities still clung to the traditional "convoy system" that requires strong banks to help the weak.

Like most other Japanese banks, NCB's problems stem from the property market collapse after a surge of incautious lending during the bubble economy of the late 1980s. Many bad loans that NCB is having to write off were to *jusen* housing loan firms, which were hardest hit by the steep drop in land prices.

The telephone bank was forced to confirm its expansion plans after Michael Forsyth, Secretary of State for Scotland, cited it as an example of the Government's success in attracting jobs to Scotland. Both sites are in enterprise zones that offer generous terms to relocating companies.

JOHN CHARCOL[illegible]

House prices up 1%, says Halifax

UK house prices rose 1 per cent in March, according to the Halifax Building Society. But the UK's largest mortgage lender insisted the housing market is continuing to recover "at only a moderate pace".

The March increase followed a 0.6 per cent rise in February. The Halifax said the average seasonally adjusted cost of a house was now £67,334. Prices were 7.2 per cent higher than the same time last year. "Despite a sharp rise in house prices in March, UK prices are still 4.2 per cent below their peak in May 1989," a Halifax spokesman said.

"Though we again confirm that the market is continuing to recover, this is still at only a moderate pace." Last week Nationwide said house prices rose 1.6 per cent in March.

Bars launch

Survey Free Inns said it is to launch a new brand — the "Bar Med" cafe bar. Tony Hill, Survey Free Inns managing director, said: "Bar Med will complement the group's existing portfolio in that they will be located in town centres and will be focused on trade from the business community by day and the pre-dub crowd by night."

Stadco sale

Hall Engineering said it has sold the assets and business of Stadco Automation for around £8.4 million to Estil. Stadco is involved in the design and manufacture of automated assembly and welding systems. Its operating assets to December 31 were £1.1 million, with operating profit, prior to allocation of central costs, at £1.8 million.

Plysu deal

Plysu, the paper and packaging group, has bought Ward Products, a manufacturer of plastic gardening products at Darlington, West Midlands, for just under £1 million.



PETER HORTON, managing director of Hit Entertainment, the children's cartoon programme maker that floated on the Alternative Investment Market in July last year,

with some of the group's characters. Hit yesterday reported a 91.5 per cent rise in pre-tax profits to £1 million (£527,000) for the year to December 31. Sales rose 16.7

Suez shareholders seek large merger payout

FROM ADAM SAGE IN PARIS

FRENCH industrialists were last night engaged in a struggle for power and money over plans to merge Compagnie de Suez, the holding company, and Lyonnaise des Eaux, the utilities group.

Jean-Louis Beffa, chairman of Saint-Gobain, the glass manufacturer, said Suez's shareholders wanted a large payout if the merger goes ahead. With tensions mounting over his demand, and over other aspects of the deal, Suez cancelled a press conference on its 1996 results, scheduled for this morning.

Analysts said the last-minute cancellation was a sign of the difficulties that had arisen over what would be one of the biggest financial transactions in France.

Last week, Suez and Lyon-

naise des Eaux confirmed market speculation that they were involved in merger talks. Both companies are to hold special board meetings on April 11 to discuss the deal.

Lyonnaise, which consists of holdings in the water, energy and construction sectors, needs a cash injection if it is to make up ground on its wealthier rival, Générale des Eaux.

Last night, Suez was expected to issue a communiqué confirming that it has the financial assets to enable Lyonnaise to expand. The group has assets of Fr34 billion and a cash pile of Fr5 billion.

Founded to oversee the Suez canal, the company lacks a clear strategy after selling Indosuez, its property portfolio and its investment bank. Analysts say the conglomerate that

would result from the tie-up would be among France's ten biggest companies and one of the most powerful players in European utilities. Lyonnaise, the smaller of the two, will absorb Suez. Investors are likely to receive about two shares in Lyonnaise for each Suez share, with a dividend for Suez shareholders.

At a press conference yesterday, M Beffa said shareholders should be given a payout of about 10 per cent of Suez's financial assets. "I think that it would not be bad for Suez shareholders, given the disappointing results they have had in the past, and given the bet they are ready to take to put their financial assets behind a new conglomerate, to give them a reasonable share, by redistributing financial assets to them."

He said Saint-Gobain, which has a 6 per cent stake in Suez, had the support of Asa-UAP, the insurer, and Banque Nationale de Paris, the banking group, which have similar stakes. Générale des Eaux, which opposes the merger, is also likely to back the request.

However, the sum demanded by M Beffa will spark fierce arguments behind the scenes. For Lyonnaise, the deal would lose much of its interest if Suez uses its cash pile as a sweetener for shareholders. Other difficulties also remain. Under the original plans, Jérôme Monod, the Lyonnaise chairman, was to head the new conglomerate, with Gérard Mestrallet, the chairman of Suez, becoming director-general. These plans are thought to be under negotiation.

Rate of output growth slows down

BY ALASDAIR MURRAY

THE manufacturing sector grew for a tenth successive month in March, although the rate of growth slowed to its lowest level since last summer as companies shed jobs to keep costs under control.

The Purchasing Managers Index fell from 53.4 in February to 52.9, although it was above the 50 points level that indicates the sector is growing.

The Chartered Institute of Purchasing and Supply (CIPS), which prepares the figures, said the slight decline was a result of the first drop in manufacturing employment for almost a year.

The strong pound is also holding back growth, with exports running at levels below those seen in the last quarter of 1996, although a pick-up in European markets led to a slight improvement in last month's export output figures.

The surge in sterling has also helped to keep the lid on factory-gate inflation, with the price of raw materials falling for the seventeenth month running, according to the CIPS survey. Manufacturers are also continuing to de-stock.

Economists said that the figures were unlikely to alter the outlook for rates — which are predicted to rise after the election. The Bank of England is likely to be concerned by the strong rise in domestic demand that has been the engine behind manufacturing growth in recent months. But Simon Briscoe, UK economist at Nikko Europe, said that the fall in employment suggested that manufacturers still believe the recovery is fragile and growth is only likely to continue at a moderate pace.

Growth in the housing market slowed slightly in February, according to data published by the British Bankers Association. Seasonally adjusted net lending figures rose £743 million, compared with £806 million in January. New approvals rose 9 per cent to 34,529 with the average value of approvals rising 10 per cent compared with January. But both figures were down on the 32 per cent rise in the number and value of transactions recorded a year ago.

BUSINESS ROUNDUP

Newcastle United premium expected

SHARES in Newcastle United are expected to open at a modest 10p to 20p premium to the 135p flotation price when dealings begin today. At a market value of £193 million, however, Newcastle will be second only to Manchester United in terms of market value. Manchester is worth about £418 million on the stock market. Chelsea, number three in the financial league is worth £189 million.

Proceeds from the Newcastle United float have been earmarked for reducing club debt, paying transfer fee instalments and boosting Newcastle's youth development scheme. Take-up from Newcastle fans proved so strong that the club was unable to give any of the 15 per cent tranche of the shares set aside for its retail offer to the public. Only applications from season ticketholders and other preferential groups, such as existing shareholders, were successful. The remaining 85 per cent has been taken up by institutional investors.

Sci back in the black

SCI ENTERTAINMENT, the video game producer, registered a pre-tax profit of £504,210 in the six months to December 31, compared with a £1.6 million loss in the 16 months to June 30, 1996. The group turned round from a 15.67p loss per share to 3.54p of earnings, although there is no dividend. Jane Cavanagh, managing director, said: "I am delighted to announce this excellent first-half performance, following a highly respectable Christmas trading period. We are already excited about the prospects for our highly controversial racing game, Carmageddon, due out in May."

Heavy trading in Bre-X

SHARES of Bre-X, the gold mining company, opened briefly yesterday after their suspension on the Toronto stock market, but stopped trading because the exchange's computers could not handle the massive order flow. Eight million shares changed hands in the first half hour. The shares continued to trade in Montreal and Alberta and rose C\$1.35 to C\$3.85. Bre-X's shares collapsed last week on reports that its Indonesian mine may have far less gold than previously thought. The Canadian authorities are waiting for a full report on the size of the gold deposits before deciding on a full inquiry.

Olympic deal for SEA

SEA MULTIMEDIA registered net income before tax for 1996 of \$713,066, compared with a loss of \$342,888, on sales up from \$729,653 to \$3.9 million. There is no dividend, but earnings per share reached 3.30 cents from 1.87 cents of losses. SEA, listed on Aim, has signed an agreement with the International Olympic Committee for rights to publish multimedia products using Olympic logos until December 31, 2000. The company says that it will bring three or four games to the market during 1998. The company also believes that the multimedia market is at the start of an expansion phase.

Trial for cancer 'cure'

CORTECS INTERNATIONAL, the drug development company, hopes to start human trials next year of a new group of molecules that it says appear to be effective against cancer. Cortecs told a conference in Germany that in studies carried out with the CRC Centre for Cancer Therapeutics at the Royal Marsden Hospital the so-called Celcom molecules had shown anti-tumour activity against ovarian, lung, colon and breast cancers. Cortecs said that in laboratory tests its lead compound inhibited the growth of human ovarian tumour without clinically observed toxic effects.

Pillar Property sale

PILLAR PROPERTY INVESTMENTS is raising about £18 million through the sale of a 100,000 sq ft office building in Bracknell, Berkshire, to the Teachers Insurance & Annuity Association of America. The consideration for Mercury House, which is almost midway through a 25-year lease to Mercury Communications, represents a net initial yield of nearly 8 per cent. Pillar, which acquired the property in 1991, will redirect the proceeds of the disposal into further acquisitions in the retail sector.

Society offers jobs aid

NATIONWIDE Building Society is launching a job search service to help unemployed mortgage borrowers to return to work. The new service is part of Paymentguard, its mortgage protection product. The service would normally cost £100 and will be provided free to insured Nationwide customers who become unemployed. Nationwide said that with periods of unemployment lasting on average eight months, customers require not only financial assistance but practical help to find work.

Triplex Lloyd deal

TRIPLEX LLOYD, the UK specialist castings group, has acquired the business and assets of Feingusswerk Bochum, the German castings company, from Thyssen Guss AG, for an initial £6 million cash. Feingusswerk manufactures cast blades and vanes for turbine engines. An additional payment of about £3.6 million will become due if certain turnover targets are met within the next five years. Triplex said it would set up a subsidiary named TFB Feingusswerk Bochum GmbH to operate the business.

Yorkshire Water tax up

YORKSHIRE WATER'S tax charge is expected to be £6 million higher in the year to March 31 after its Yorkshire Water Services subsidiary entered into long-dated finance lease facilities totalling £265 million. The deals will raise the tax charge in the early years but this will be more than offset in the medium term by significant interest savings, which continue over the life of the facilities. The facilities have maturities of 25 and 35 years and form part of the financing of YWS's capital expenditure programme.

Engineering jobs warning as strong pound hits exports

BY CHRISTINE BUCKLEY, INDUSTRIAL CORRESPONDENT

THE engineering industry may have to cut jobs in a drive to stay competitive because the strength of sterling has hit its export performance.

The warning came after a marked deterioration in exports in the first three months of this year and amid fears that imports would further eat away at the UK industry.

The EEF, the grouping of engineering employers, highlighted the impact of sterling from a survey of more than 1,700 companies. It showed a fall in the export order balance to -2 per cent in March compared with +9 per cent in December. The fall is only the second time in three years that a negative balance for orders has been recorded.

Graham Mackenzie, Director-General of the EEF, said: "If sterling remains at its current level there has to be a concern that export performance is further threatened and import penetration of the home market will rise, unless the UK industry can cut its cost base

further." Alan Armitage, economist at the organisation, said that the strength of the pound would have an impact on all aspects of engineering businesses, including jobs and other costs, if it continued to depress exports.

The real damage to the industry will emerge over the course of the year because of the long lead times involved in engineering.

Mr Mackenzie said: "The results for the first quarter of 1997 give concern. There are clear signs that export orders are slowing... we shall not see the full effect of this change in the UK's relative competitiveness for many months."

Engineering output in general has continued to grow although the pace has slowed this year. New orders increased 13 per cent in March compared with 15 per cent in the previous three months.

Last month, Vickers, the engineering group involved in the defence business and luxury cars, said that the strong pound would knock between £6 million and £7 million off its profits this year.

Clothes shopping catalogue launch next year

M&S moves nearer home

BY SARAH CUNNINGHAM

MARKS & SPENCER, the high street retailer, confirmed yesterday that it is to launch home shopping catalogues offering its range of adult clothing. The move is sure to stir up the already highly-competitive home shopping sector.

The company, which controls around 16 per cent of the UK clothing market, will begin regional tests of the catalogues, which will feature selected adult clothing, in a year's time.

It said it is responding "to the increasing desire for cus-

tomers to shop from home". Closely watched by the rest of the industry, the company has had a team on the project for over a year. Industry insiders had expected trials to start as early as this autumn.

Marks & Spencer said yesterday it will launch a national campaign this summer to sell its schoolwear range by catalogue after trials last year.

The home shopping operation has been developing a wholly-owned facility in Warrington, Cheshire. Order-taking and fulfilment capacity is being built and recruitment of staff has already begun. It will make use of the database built

up on its five million M&S account cardholders. Marks & Spencer has already developed a business delivering home furnishings, flowers, hampers and wine direct to customers' homes, with turnover totalling £85 million. Business clothing is also sold by catalogue.

In the wake of Next's success in selling its clothing through its Directory, the Burton Group is also developing catalogues offering clothing from its Dorothy Perkins, Principles, Burtons, Top Shop, Top Man and Evans chains.

FOUR STAR		
	Bank	Bank
	Buy	Sell
Australia \$	2.18	2.02
Austria Sch	20.20	19.70
Belgium Fr	52.37	51.47
Canada \$	2.376	2.276
Cyprus Cyp	0.048	0.048
Denmark Kr	10.37	10.17
Finland Mk	6.88	7.88
France Fr	9.50	8.38
Germany DM	2.88	2.57
Greece Dr	452	426
Hong Kong \$	12.34	12.34
India Ru	120	100
Ireland Pt	1.03	1.01
Israel Shk	5.73	5.13
Italy Lira	9880	2890
Japan Yen	216.70	200.70
Malaysia M	0.528	0.503
Netherlands Gld	3.218	2.983
New Zealand \$	9.20	9.25
Norway Kr	11.25	10.58
Portugal Esc	286.50	287.00
S Africa Rd	2.52	2.52
Spain Ps	245.00	222.00
Sweden Kr	13.21	12.21
Switzerland Fr	2.49	2.21
Turkey Lira	217.00	205.00
USA \$	1.739	1.599

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□ Election is the worry for UK shares □ City hirers want to close their chequebooks □ Bankers fret over EMU

Surfing Wall Street's wave

WALL STREET bears managed to start a respectful Mexican wave round the global market stadium yesterday. New Zealand's index fell 1.3 per cent. Jakarta and Bangkok markets shared falls of 1.5 per cent. France and Belgium nearly doubled that, though Tokyo and Shanghai merely bowed from a seated position. Vienna and Copenhagen reckoned a drop of 2.6 per cent appropriate and in Warsaw seven stocks were down, six up and seven unchanged, leaving the average 2.8 per cent lower.

The global echo paid tribute to the power of American investment funds. What they can put in, they can take out. Even London fund managers know that any serious break in share prices across the Atlantic is likely to cause their American equivalents to pull back from what their clients perceive to be more risky non-American markets.

Turning points that are waiting to happen can easily be set off by a few traders exploiting thin holiday markets. Given the inter-day volatility of Wall Street in recent months, however, few yet presume that the Easter wave will turn into a summer trend.

At the turn of the year, market analysts on both sides of the Atlantic reckoned 1997 should be the first "down year" for shares since 1994. Equities had risen

ahead of profits and interest rates were destined to rise, at least in Britain and America. By mid-February, however, the Dow Jones average had gained a further 9 per cent. A month later, just before the election was declared, London's FTSE-100 was 8 per cent up in ten weeks. It is still 5 per cent ahead.

Since interest rate rises were supposedly factored into the markets' views, the favourite trigger for a correction was a slowdown in profit growth reported by American companies. After all, the Federal Reserve would have raised rates long ago had it not anticipated the economy slowing of its own accord. The rising dollar (or pound) made this more likely.

That analysis may be too sophisticated. When the Fed's Alan Greenspan raised US rates by a quarter point, markets were initially relieved that he had finally done what everyone expected. But his caution has given ammunition to bears. If there is one rate rise, there must be more another in May, perhaps, and one more in the autumn. This is neither more nor less likely than

it was ten days ago, but remains the easy bet. People can understand trends.

There is even less new information in the London market, where ratings are still comfortably lower than New York. In London, however, election uncertainty has strangely failed to stay the hands of buyers. It will receive more attention now. Utility stocks are already weak. Nerves will surely now jangle over rises in corporation tax or cuts in pension funds' investment tax privileges.

Once you start worrying, there is plenty to worry about — but not, as yet, a crash.

Pay now, moan later

THERE was a time when few in the City would dream of sounding off about pay and bonuses. One's word was one's bond, and one's salary was a matter for quiet reflection on the 4.58 pm to Colchester.

The new breed of investment banker is more outspoken on matters of remuneration: though



naturally only other people's. It started last May, when Rudi Mueller, non-executive chairman of UBS, said that unpalatable pay packets threatened lasting indigestion. The system had "gone crazy". Firms were paying too much and the slightest downturn would cause terrible casualties.

Regulators were swift to join the chorus. Sir Andrew Large, outgoing chairman of the Securities and Investments Board, called for a balance between rewarding employees, and inciting them to take dangerous risks. Howard Davies, Deputy-Governor of the Bank of England, said bonuses had become a "one-way bet" for traders, and should reflect longer-term performance.

Re-enter the bankers. Sir John Craven, outgoing chairman of Deutsche Morgan Grenfell, says the City has degenerated into a friendless place, where mercenary instinct rules supreme. My word is my bond, but has a price.

Peter Middleton, boss of Salomon Brothers in Europe, accuses his competitors of paying more than they should for "pretty mediocre people". This from a man who has been brandishing the chequebook in an attempt to bolster the US group's local standing.

There is undoubtedly an element of hypocrisy in all this, but that is besides the point. The very fact that Middleton and his peers are willing to stand up and trumpet their views, suggests just how far the City has swung since Big Bang. Ten years ago, the pay cheques were flying just as fast, but with little of the fuss seen today. It took Black Monday and the onset of recession to bring the market down to earth.

Which leaves us where? Harder times will return, but something more may be needed. Firms such as Salomon are taking the lead in linking

bonuses to performance, but share the blame in reaching deep in their pockets for the best talent.

Fear of poisoning by euro-banana

RISKS posed by "greedy and disloyal staff" now loom large among potential banana skins facing banks, according to the latest poll of bankers and their customers, regulators and analysts by the Centre for the Study of Financial Innovation. When managers loathe the people they pay vast sums to operate business they distrust, you can be sure the profits are vast. Weak-minded, complacent management again figures top of this annual storm-warning exercise, which comes too late for Nippon Credit Bank.

Leaping straight into the anxiety charts at number two comes a more surprising newcomer: Europe's monetary union. Only banks seem to be preparing for the euro. This could be the problem, especially for continental banks that assume it will start on the treaty date. Preparation

is costing a packet, which may be irrecoverable if EMU heightens competition. Regional French and Italian banks may have little to offer wholesale markets if their own currency disappears and could lose valuable foreign exchange revenue.

Deals based on currencies converging could cause mayhem if EMU is delayed or cancelled, or if, for instance, the peseta or the lira is left out. What happens if EMU falters during the 1999-2002 transition, when banks have to assume founder currencies are interchangeable? If it goes ahead, there seems no way to cope with a market crisis if key states get into trouble.

In the UK, disaster is more likely, not just for banks, if a Blair government decides late to abolish sterling in 2002 and plump for the euro-banana.

Flight delay

AS EUROPE nominally opens its skies, the door remains closed on another long-impending deal. This week, British Airways and American Airlines were scheduled to go live with their super-alliance, but a deal is as far off as ever. Washington and London are unlikely to reach any decisions until June, and little will happen before October 30 when BA's winter season kicks in. If it happens at all.

Amstrad in value pledge to investors

By ERIC REGULY

AMSTRAD, the electronics group, plans to "return value" to shareholders in the wake of yesterday's sale of Dancall, its Danish mobile-phone subsidiary, to Robert Bosch of Germany for £92 million.

Alan Sugar, Amstrad's chairman and controlling shareholder, would not provide details, but analysts and bankers said that a special dividend, a share buyback or a corporate reorganisation that might include the demerger of the group's remaining operations were possibilities. The shares rose 2½ p to 22½ p.

Amstrad said that it sold Dancall because it had taken the company as far as it could and that an international powerhouse such as Bosch, with its technical expertise and global distribution capabilities, was realistically far better qualified to take Dancall forward.

Amstrad paid £6.3 million for Dancall in 1993 and invested a further £10 million to turn round the struggling company. The sale price repre-

sents a 600 per cent return on investment in less than four years.

Bosch, whose interests range from vehicle components to telecoms infrastructure, said that it was attracted to Dancall because it was the first mobile-phone company to launch a handset with full international roaming capability, allowing it to work in Europe and North America.

The company and its 600 employees in Denmark will be integrated into Bosch Telecom, the group's communications business.

A spokesman said that Bosch's goal was to expand Dancall to the point where it could compete with Motorola, Nokia and Ericsson, the mobile-phone leaders.

The Dancall sale almost doubles Amstrad's cash level to £200 million. Mr Sugar said that the company would reveal its plans to return value to shareholders in several months.

Tempos, page 28

Liberty to sell stake in Muji

By SARAH CUNNINGHAM

LIBERTY, the stores and fabrics group, is selling its 49 per cent stake in Muji, the Japanese store chain, to Ryohin Keikaku, its joint venture partner, for £1.25 million.

Liberty will use the cash to help to pay for the redesign and refurbishment of the interior of its Regent Street store.

Denis Cassidy, chairman, said: "We have decided to dispose of our interest because our stated strategic priority is to focus on the development of the Regent Street flagship store, the building of the Liberty brand and its expansion in domestic and international markets."

Leases on three of the four existing Muji shops in London will be transferred. The Great Marlborough Street shop will revert to Liberty in a year's time.

Ryohin Keikaku is looking for a new West End site and plans to enlarge its existing stores and expand the chain. It wants to open about three stores a year in the UK and continental Europe.

Holland & Barrett up for sale

By SARAH CUNNINGHAM

GEHE, the German pharmaceutical wholesale and retail company, intends to sell the Holland & Barrett health food shop chain and two other businesses belonging to Lloyds Chemists, which it acquired earlier this year for £684 million.

The other two businesses are National Veterinary Supplies and Martindales, a specialist pharmaceutical supplier. Altogether, the three are expected to fetch up to £250 million. Sales memorandums were sent out to potential bidders a fortnight ago.

AAH, Gehe's British wholesale arm, which is being merged with Lloyds, said: "The sale of these three will allow AAH to concentrate on its core activities."

Holland & Barrett has 400 branches and is Britain's largest health food retail chain. Interested buyers are believed to include General Nutrition Centre of the US and Allen Lloyd, the founding chairman of Lloyds Chemists.

Tadpole Technology suspends shares

TADPOLE TECHNOLOGY, the one-time wonder of the stock market that has seen its shares plunge from 440p to 20p over the past two years, yesterday suspended its listing on the Stock Exchange (Chris Ayres writes).

The company, which makes laptop computers, is expected to publish its annual report and accounts today.

Bernard Hulme, who became chief executive of Tadpole when its founder George Grey resigned in July last

year, is believed to be looking for extra funding for the company.

Robert Booth, Tadpole's finance director, yesterday said the suspension was not related to a takeover or merger.

Last year, Tadpole incurred a pre-tax loss of £4.39 million, reduced from a loss of £9.9 million for the previous year. Sales were £23.95 million, down from £24.17 million, and there was a basic loss per share of 16.6p, compared with 38.7p for the previous year.

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Share slide stemmed but further falls are forecast

SHARE prices and government bonds took a pasting on the London stock market in the wake of heavy losses on Wall Street. The Dow Jones industrial average fell almost 300 points over the Easter period as worries about further rises in US interest rates unnerved investors.

Open short positions and the absence of any genuine selling pressure enabled the equity market in London to limit the losses, which were halved by the close. The FTSE 100 index, down 12.4 at 4,200.5 first thing, closed 6.8 off at 4,248.1. Shares changing hands numbered a mere 654 million.

But traders remain cautious about the medium-term outlook for the London market. They say its closure on Friday insulated it from the full force of the shake-out on Wall Street, so that when trading resumed yesterday everyone was fully prepared.

Martin Lupton, head of market-making at Dresdner Kleinwort Benson, said: "I still expect the market to return on down towards the 4,100 level. It will be lower in a month's time than it is now."

Richard Jeffrey, economist at Charterhouse, the merchant bank, takes a similar view.

The US financial markets have begun to perceive that the tightening in US monetary policy might be greater than initially thought. He says further rises in interest rates are inevitable.

Leading shares were the worst hit. BOC Group dropped 14.5p to 94.1p, Shell fell 2p to £10.59p. Unilever was down 43.1p to £15.71p. SmithKline Beecham lost 32.2p to 87.0p, and HSBC dropped 44.4p to £14.49p.

Amstrad stood out with a jump of 21.1p to 221.1p after announcing the sale of its loss-making Dancall mobile telephone subsidiary to Bosch Telecom of Germany for £92 million.

Alan Sugar said Amstrad was now looking at the most efficient way of returning some of that cash to shareholders. Amstrad bought Dancall from the receivers for £7 million in 1993. Last year merger talks between Psion and Amstrad collapsed. Psion had been hoping to buy Dancall. Its failure left the shares 12.1p down at 41p.

Royal Bank of Scotland fell 13p to 52.4p after ABN Amro



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Hoare Govett, the broker, urged clients to switch into Bank of Scotland, 2.1p easier at 318p.

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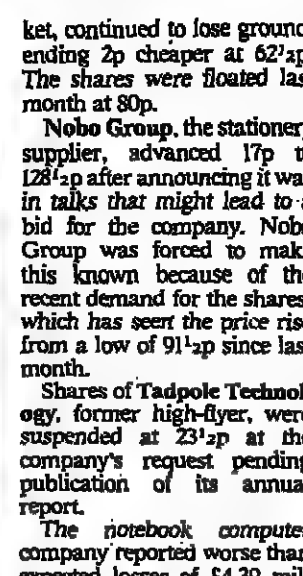
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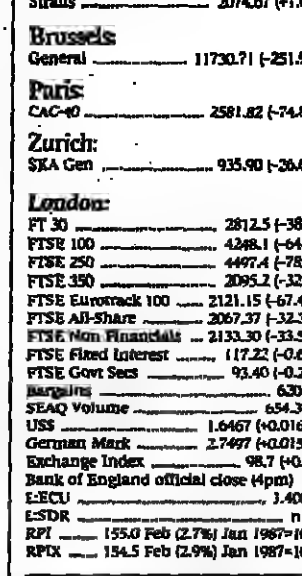
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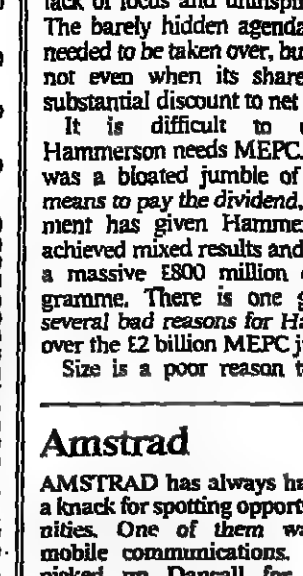
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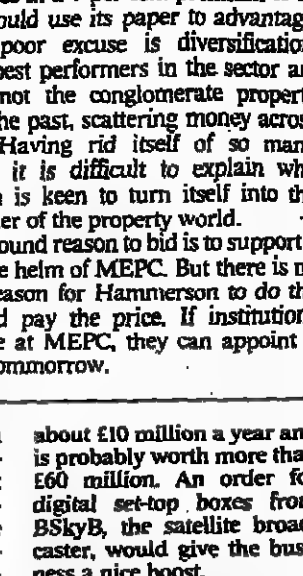
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TEMPUS

A bid too far

ONCE upon a time, ambitious chief executives dragged their reluctant shareholders into foolhardy bids. Today, a group of angry shareholders seem to be pushing Hammerson into a bid for MEPC. For years, fund managers have been whispering that something must be done about MEPC's underperformance, nil growth in dividend, lack of focus and uninspiring

THE TIMES CITY DIARY

How a forger came unstuck

FULL marks to the diligent investigator from the SFO who uncovered one of the crucial pieces of evidence that helped to convict Robert Feld, former chief executive of Resort Hotels.

Faces played a key part in Feld's deception, but it was almost impossible to tell exactly how the cosmetic forgeries had been carried out, without recourse to the original documents. Eventually, a bank statement of liabilities was unearthed, with strips of paper glued on to cover the level of Feld's indebtedness.

When jurors were shown the offending document, however, the heat of the spotlight projector melted away the glue and the forgery literally came apart in front of the court. Underneath a scrap of paper marking debts "nil", was a more realistic figure of £5 million.

Duty calls

SO, THAT'S how Alan Sugar spent his 50th birthday. On board his luxury yacht, anchored in Spanish waters, Amstar's soccer-loving chairman was surrounded by friends and family.

In between opening presents and blowing out candles on Sugar 24, the combative Sugar spent much of the day with his Daucall mobile phone stuck to his ear. His half-century celebrations happened to coincide with the £92 million deal with Bosch Telecom.



Sugar interrupted his birthday for a deal

Good citizens

HIT Entertainment has been under siege from fertile women. In response to an advertisement that appeared in this week's *Bedfordshire Times & Citizen* — placed by an infertile couple looking to have children — the media company's receptionist has been kept unusually busy.

Peter Orton, Hit's managing director, was the first to feel the full force of the blunder when he came in to work on Easter Monday, in anticipation of yesterday's results. Orton's answer machine was alive with calls from a chorus of benevolent women, keen to offer their personal services.

Hit's telephone number had been mistakenly printed in place of that of the London Fertility Centre.

Swish job

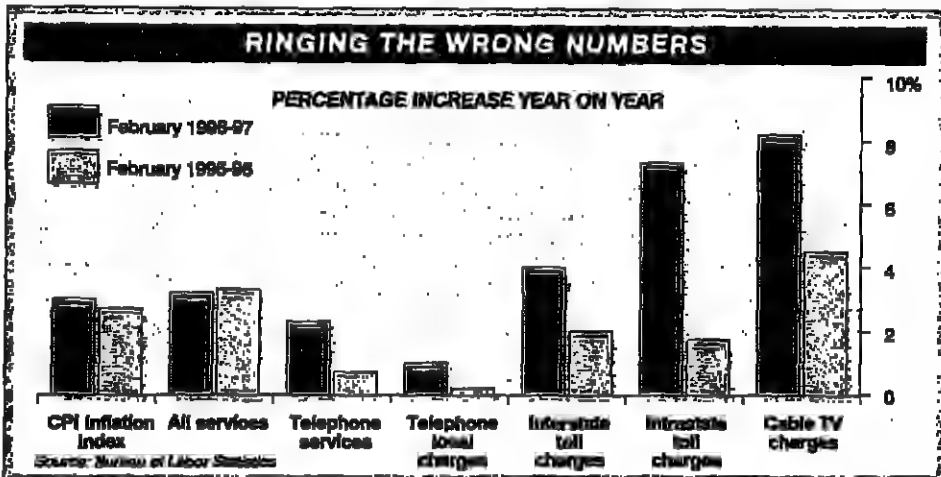
IAN MARTIN, chairman of Unigate Granada, has been appointed non-executive chairman of Newmond. Formed in January as a result of a £360 million management buyout from Williams Holdings, and backed by Canderog Investments and Electra, Newmond is one of the UK's leading building products groups.

With brands such as Rawplug, Swish, Hearac, Aqualisa, and Valor, we can expect a stock market flotation within the next four years. As a non-executive director of Granada and House of Fraser, Martin will be well rewarded for his latest commitment; a starting salary of £75,000 a year for one day's work a week.

MORAG PRESTON

America shortchanged by the Telephone Bill

Telecoms law has proved a nightmare, Bronwen Maddox says



provide phone services over their networks. Nor have phone companies yet made serious steps to get into video. But the greatest obstacle to competition is the need for the FCC and the separate state regulatory commissions to untangle the jumble of cross-subsidies between different telecom markets that have been the basis of US regulation for decades. The guiding principle of US telecom regulation has been that local calls should be heavily subsidised by long-distance calls. The subsidy has been worth tens of billions of dollars a year.

Three closely related areas are proving difficult. The first is who should pay for providing

"universal access" — affordable local calls across the whole country. In the past, the costs were covered by subsidies: under the new law, they must be made explicit, and paid for out of a new fund. The FCC is due to give its views on the size of the fund — and the contributors — by May 8.

The Clinton Administration has made the problem worse by demanding that schools and libraries be equipped free of charge with high-speed cable suitable for browsing the Internet. But the President has declined to say who should bear the cost.

The second contentious point is the level of access charges — the fees that long-distance

phone carriers pay to local phone companies to deliver the calls over the last stretch of line. In the past, these have been deliberately set higher than the costs of providing the connection. The revenues — worth about \$20 billion a year to local companies — are one of the main subsidies currently keeping the cost of local calls low. The FCC will give its views in early May.

The third dispute is over the level of "interconnection charges" which phone companies pay each other to complete their calls. The FCC has given its view, but is being challenged in court by state regulatory commissions and telephone companies. The task facing the regulators is an economist's nightmare: it requires them to work out thousands of different costs, and then to share the burden out across a huge industry. To Robert Crandall of the Brookings Institution, a Washington think-tank, the task is "a monster", requiring regulators to "disaggregate an entire industry and reset rates".

The task is also politically hazardous. Congress is now dimly recognising what the industry saw from the start: if all the subsidies are unpicked, the cost of local calls will rise sharply. In the US, where neighbourhood calls are al-

most always free, the change would be politically explosive.

But attempts to put the law into practice are proving a lawyer's dream. Each time the FCC gives a ruling, it is effectively proposing to redistribute billions of dollars between a handful of companies; such is the value at stake, it is bound to be challenged in the courts. According to Neil Hickey of the Columbia Journalism Review, the law could be dubbed the "Full Employment Act for Telecommunications Lawyers".

In the midst of this paralysis, it is striking that the greatest activity has come in the newest segments of the industry, which are hardly affected by the new law. Wireless telephone companies are springing up across the country, bringing cellular telephone rates sharply down. In television, direct broadcast satellite services, which had never achieved much popularity in the US, have rapidly sold dishes to 4.6 million households. That unexpected competition is one reason why the telecoms industry sharply underperformed the stock market last year (see chart).

But frustration with the central part of the Act is still running so high that many have been tempted to recommend a grand quick-fix, no matter how politically contentious. Thomas Hazlett, an economist, suggests letting wireless phone companies use sections of the airwaves reserved for television. Mr Crandall favours the abolition of all regulation after a specified number of years. "With regulated competition," he says, "the FCC ends up cutting political deals".

But telecoms remains a highly political industry, and deals that depart from the economic ideal are the likely outcome. If regulators conclude that local phone rates should rise, they may still try to fudge the manner in which it is done, eg, by loading charges onto "special" services.

The lesson of the Telecommunications Act is clear: Congress tried to do far too much, and ended up doing far too little. Hours of congressional time were devoted to the clause stipulating that a "v-chip" must be built into television sets to allow parents to screen their children from sex and violence. Yet while the Act blithely told regulators to strip away billions of dollars in subsidies, it paid little attention to how this would be accomplished.

The irony is that, if members of Congress had realised the full implications — that local phone bills may rise — they would probably not have passed the law. But if the US is to achieve the competitive market the Act envisaged, such a step is necessary.



ANTHONY HARRIS

Misreading the Greenspan correction

A market shakeout in fear of rising interest rates? Considering that the markets held Alan Greenspan, the Fed Chairman, in such reverence, it is surprising that some analysts still don't seem to listen to what he says. A few weeks ago the Chairman caused some shock when he spoke of the "irrational exuberance" of the markets; but that failed to deflate what threatened to become a bubble. So now he has asserted himself with another 25-basis-point rise in interest rates, which did the trick in 1994. This time there has been a correction; but so far it is only a mild one, leaving all Street prices still well above their level at the start of the year.

So the interesting questions have not much to do with the US economy and its supposed "need" of higher rates. In fact there is still almost no sign of inflationary pressures, and a growth rate which has reached 3.8 per cent annually in a single quarter is hardly a major shock, and is expected to ease before long. The Fed Governors, indeed, still talk of an economy where inflationary and recessionary forces are near to balance. There is little reason in the economy for the Fed to act again in haste: it can wait and see, as was until recently its habit.

However, a stock market boom that passes rational levels and heads into speculative country, as it did in 1929 (let alone 1929), is a real threat. It can generate wealth illusions that encourage over-borrowing, and the correction, when it comes, can easily turn into a panic.

Remember, too, that Greenspan's first experience as Chairman was managing a really sharp correction: Wall Street prices fell 30 per cent, but the Fed managed to prevent any spillover into the economy. That success was the basis of his reputation, and is a good clue to his present intentions. He would probably regard a 10 per cent correction as thoroughly healthy, and remain fairly unworried if it ran towards 20 per cent. It would be surprising if he was remotely satisfied

with the present correction of less than 3 per cent.

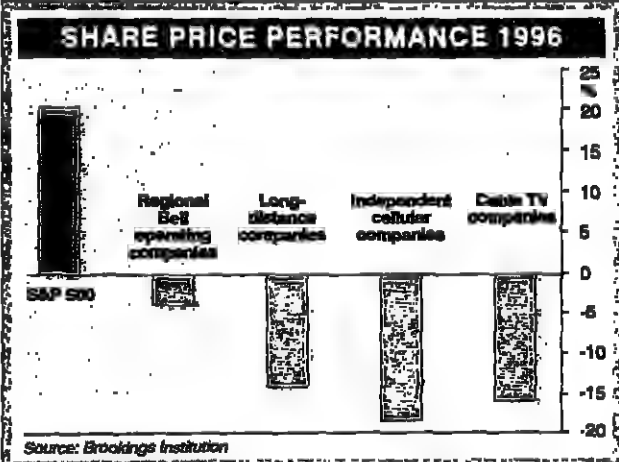
Will it go on down? That depends not on the market professionals, but on the ordinary American saver, for it is ordinary small savings that have fuelled the bull market.

Small savers do not follow the market closely, and usually show strong nerves. They switched into the funds partly because of panic after the savings and loan scandal, which wiped out so many savings institutions; partly, ironically enough, because of the low rates introduced by Greenspan, primarily to bail out the banks. So it has been a Greenspan bull market, and small savers have prospered. It may now need a much bigger fall to catch their attention; certainly, it will need quite a long period of zero capital gains. Then and only then are they likely to notice that the income return on ordinary savings accounts and on government and municipal bonds is now quite attractive again.

It was, after all, the continued flow of savings into the mutual funds that drove the US market up again after the first Greenspan warning; so it could happen again. Indeed, the signs so far, both in New York and in London, are that it will. A bull market psychology is not so easily disturbed, as can be seen at present in the London house market.

Remember, too, that there are still strong forces tending to drive asset prices up, notably the growing realisation that the pension promises made by the State are not to be trusted. People are trying to secure their income in old age through their private efforts, which are realistic and admirable. The problem for monetary policy is to manage this switch while avoiding dangerous speculative excesses.

So, putting the horse and the cart in the right order, we now face a real danger that interest rates may have to rise further than the British economy, let alone the US economy, require simply because there has not been a real market correction. Just a quiet little rehearsal.



BUSINESS LETTERS

L&G's proposal to solve pensions mis-selling saga may be better for customers

From Mr Malcolm Oliver
Sir, Pennington (March 21) is probably right to be dubious about Legal & General's motives in proposing an alternative to the long drawn-out pensions review process. An industry that for so long denied the existence of any problem, or opined that it was only the other companies that were mis-selling, must expect comparisons with Greeks bearing gifts, especially when, as Pennington observes, the alternative has some significant advantages for the insurers.

But that analysis ignores a vital perspective — that of the customer. Given the grievous concern that so many have been caused, is it not right to

do what is in their best interests? Although both the industry and the regulators may long forbear to admit it, the present review process fails this test.

There are two problems with the review: it is taking too long; and the eventual outcome will merely be to put the customer back in the position that hypothetically they would have been in had they been given what was then best advice at the point of sale.

That would be fine if personal pensions transfers were universally bad. They are not: it is only the circumstances of low inflation and low anticipated investment returns in recent years, coupled with

relatively high management charges, which mean that the projectable returns from the personal pensions were generally worse than the benefits from occupational schemes.

But many of the pensions currently under review will not become payable for 20 or 30 years. Over that period, it is quite conceivable that inflation and investment returns will rise, or even that pensions management charges may be reduced. Some of those customers currently being reinstated in their former schemes might find themselves worse off. That surely cannot be equitable.

The Legal & General scheme offers those potentially

disadvantaged in effect a one-way bet: the better of either the occupational scheme that they transferred from, or the personal pension plan. It also offers a better deal for its other policyholders, because the costs of the review process (which those policyholders would ultimately pick up, or at best split with any shareholders) would be lower.

The idea is fraught with practical difficulties, but it deserves a more empathetic response. Here at last is a pension company trying to put the customer's real needs first. Yours faithfully, MALCOLM OLIVER, 26 Green Lane, Purley, Surrey.

Uphill struggle for British innovators

From Mr David Barker
Sir, Your article (British innovation 'is being blunted by a financial vacuum', March 6) is sadly true and has been for many years. Barnes Wallis being a prime example.

Grants are available, but almost impossible for smaller companies to obtain, and venture capitalists only think in millions and don't like inventors, so it is no wonder many wonderful ideas are not taken up here, although they are eventually "invented" elsewhere. My company has invented

and patented a concrete that is electro conductive and has many commercial uses. We have invested a substantial amount personally in research and development and patent fees and have just put the product to the world on the Internet in the hope that major companies will see the incredible possibilities. Will they be British? Sadly, I doubt it!

Yours faithfully, DAVID BARKER, Coopers Rise, 39a London Road, Horndean, Hampshire.

Corporate strategy and poor directors

From Mr Brian Whittingham
Sir, In an ideal world shareholders might well be able to dismiss incompetent company directors (Investors urged to sack poor board performers, March 19), but how does the layman, or indeed investment fund manager, distinguish between the effects of managerial ineptitude and economic factors over which the board has no control?

More to the point, I submit, is the fact that when an unsatisfactory director has to be sacked with six-figure

compensation, no reduction in either salary or bonuses is imposed on those who had the unwisdom to appoint that director in the first place.

After all, a prime function of senior directors is the selection and appointment of senior managers and other directors. Attention to corporate strategy is of little effect with the wrong people in charge. Yours faithfully, BRIAN WHITTINGHAM, Green Gables, Wicken Road, Clavering, Essex.

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Lufthansa-Bombardier link for new jet service

By JON ASHWORTH

BOMBARDIER, the Canadian aerospace-to-snowmobiles group, has teamed up with Lufthansa CityLine to create a new corporate jet charter company, European Business Jet Services, based at Berlin-Schoenefeld airport, will begin operations in the autumn.

Keith Bonson, UK sales manager for Emirates, the Middle Eastern carrier, has been appointed co-managing director of the new venture, the first of its kind in Europe between an airline and an aircraft manufacturer. Mr Bonson will also be responsible for sales and

marketing. He will be based in Germany. The service is aimed at businessmen with dealings in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. Learjet and Challenger supplied by Bombardier will perform round trips, thus avoiding questionable maintenance or tainted fuel supplies. The service will be linked to Lufthansa's Amadeus centralised computer system.

Bombardier has supplied Lufthansa with Canadair Regional Jets, and was impressed by the airline's extensive East European network. Michael Graff, president of Bombardier Business Aircraft, said reaction from potential

customers had been good. He said: "We will use customer aircraft currently in operation but which are not being utilised to their full potential."

Bombardier recently announced net income, before exceptional, of C\$406 million (£180 million) for the year to January 31, on revenues of C\$8 billion. A write-down on Bombardier's investment in Eurotunnel left net income for the year at C\$158 million.

Flight testing is continuing on the Bombardier Global Express, a new long-range corporate jet that features components built by Short Brothers in Belfast. BMW, Rolls-Royce and

Lucas Aerospace are among companies to back the aircraft, which will cover 6,700 nautical miles at a cruising speed of Mach 0.80. It is competing for orders with the Gulfstream GV, which has similar specifications, and is about 12 months ahead in terms of testing and production.

Bombardier has expanded aggressively in the past decade to become the world's fourth largest civil aircraft manufacturer. The aerospace division encompasses four famous aviation names - Canadair and de Havilland in Canada, Learjet in America, and Short Brothers in Belfast.

EU completes air travel deregulation programme

By HARVEY ELLIOTT
AIR CORRESPONDENT

HOPES of cheaper European air fares are unlikely to be realised quickly in spite of yesterday's final deregulation of air travel within the European Union.

Any airline can now operate any route it wishes, including internal domestic services, free from bureaucratic interference. But even the most optimistic and competitive British carriers believe it will be years, if at all, before new low-cost airlines are competing alongside the national giants and forcing down prices.

A shortage of airport space plus high landing fees and other costs will make it impossible for newcomers to break into the market at Europe's key hub airports, it is believed.

Sir Michael Bishop, chairman of British Midland, said: "My view is that there will inevitably be a feeling of anticlimax among many outside the industry who may be expecting cataclysmic change."

His airline has been at the forefront of the ten-year battle to get greater liberalisation of air travel within Europe, but he now fears that the continuing state aid to airlines and airports will effectively snuff out competition. He added: "There will be attempts to neutralise the impact of the new order. European travellers will be watching to ensure that the reality and the spirit of change is enforced."

There are now 156 scheduled airlines within Europe carrying more than 700 million passengers a year. Air fares generally are up to twice as high as for similar dis-



Sir Michael Bishop, British Midland chairman, fears continuing state aid will effectively snuff out competition

tanties flown within the US. The liberalisation process that culminated in yesterday's final unshackling of the industry took more than a decade to reach its conclusion, spread between three fiercely negotiated packages of measures.

Domestic air routes in countries with especially high fares and an inefficient airline industry may prove the most tempting to low-cost carriers

such as EasyJet. Stelios Hatzioannou, who started the cut-price airline on British domestic routes from Luton, is now planning to open a series of services within Greece.

But he will have to choose an "underserved" airport rather than the main hubs to obtain the right slots. He said: "There is competition at the big airports. Such as Frankfurt. But small low-cost airlines like

mine would be well advised to steer clear of them anyway and to concentrate instead on secondary airports as we have done at Luton.

"Greece is the obvious candidate for competition to be introduced because alone of countries within the Community it has just one large inefficient carrier on its domestic service. But there are others which we are investi-

gating as possible places for expansion in the future."

Meanwhile, British Airways is determined to carry on with its policy of offering franchises to small European carriers and Britannia, Britain's biggest charter airline, will concentrate on the British market which, it says, it knows best.

Pennington, page 27

Go-ahead for \$16.5bn 'Baby Bell' merger

FROM A CORRESPONDENT

APPROVAL by the California Public Utilities Commission has allowed the \$16.5 billion merger between SBC Communications and Pacific Tele-Service Group to go ahead. The boards of the two companies finally voted the deal through.

The merger creates America's largest provider of local telephone services, with a territory that stretches from the Mississippi River to the Pacific Ocean and with annual revenues of \$23.5 billion.

SBC, however, agreed to the California regulators demand that it issue refunds

totaling \$341 million to California consumers over a five-year period, beginning in 1998, to cover a portion of the short-term and long-term benefits of the merger.

The annual revenue of \$23.5 billion ranks the new group among the top 30 publicly held American corporations on the Fortune 500.

Edward Whitacre, SBC's chairman and chief executive officer, said: "Growth prospects for our business are outstanding. Expanding demand for Internet access and high-speed data services, strong growth in wireless

services, increased demand for basic wireline service and tremendous opportunities in long-distance and in markets outside the United States, all point to an exciting future for the new SBC."

The merger of the two "Baby Bell" companies, however, has met with stiff criticism from consumer groups and rival telephone companies, which argue that the combination of the two will slow the opening up of local exchange markets to competition.

Telephone bill, page 29

Pressac plans £8m takeover in America

PRESSAC, the electrical and electronic component specialist, raised pre-tax profits 28 per cent to £2.9 million in the six months to January 31 on sales up 15 per cent to £36.1 million. Earnings rose 30 per cent to 4.98p, allowing the interim dividend to increase 11 per cent to 1.10p.

The group announced an £8.8 million cash deal to take over the American Kaumagraph Flint Corporation, which it said would expand its plastic graphics car components business in North America.

On prospects Roger Boissier, the chairman, said: "The confidence that I expressed in my year-end statement is maintained."

US woes help to push Telemetrix into the red

By CHRIS AYRES

AN OVERAMBITIOUS acquisition and a lack of control over US operations are to blame for Telemetrix's plunge into the red in 1996, according to senior management.

The semiconductor manufacturer, which owns just over half of GTI corporation in America, yesterday reported losses of £6.9 million for the year to December 31, compared with profits of £10.4 million in 1995. Losses were 4.2p a share, against earnings of 5.3p.

Tim Curtis, Telemetrix's chief executive, said that GTI's purchase of Promptus, the US video conferencing specialist, was mainly to blame. He added: "It hasn't worked out. It was a level of commitment above us. We also don't have full management of GTI, which has caused problems."

Telemetrix has signed an agreement to sell Promptus to

Video Server, another American video conferencing company. Telemetrix is expected to get about £12 million from the sale.

Mr Curtis yesterday emphasised the underlying strength of Telemetrix's UK operations, which includes Trend, the leading ISDN test equipment manufacturer. The total dividend is maintained at 1.45p a share as a reflection of the company's profitability in the UK.

After the sale of Promptus, Telemetrix hopes to soon return a profit on Valor, GTI's networking components division.

Mr Curtis said: "Valor is close to breaking even. The profitability is improving all the time. We now want to develop the broad-band market and move into digital broadcasting. There will be no further diversification."

BUSINESS ROUNDUP

R-R \$240m deal with Continental Airlines

ROLLS-ROYCE has struck a deal with Continental Airlines worth up to \$240 million for engines to power Boeing 757 aircraft. The contract is for engines for up to 16 extra aircraft, which would mean, if all options were exercised, that Continental would have 41 Rolls-Royce-powered 757s. The deal, which includes an eight-year repair and overhaul agreement, strengthens Rolls-Royce's already dominant position in the 757 market. Continental Airlines has also agreed to buy \$45 million in spare engines from Rolls-Royce. Rolls-Royce said the engine for Continental's 757s - the RB211-535 - was chosen because of reliability and potential for saving costs.

The company is currently working to resolve problems with its RB211-524, a separate family of engines that power 747-400 aircraft. It has been in talks with a number of airlines to repair the engines that have developed faults with their blades. The company is discussing replacing parts of the engines with those from its Trent family.

Nobo bid approach

NORO, the office equipment group based in Sussex, said yesterday it had received a bid approach that "may or may not" lead to an offer being made for the company. Nobo shares rose 17p to 127½p, which values the business at nearly £23 million. The company declined to identify the potential bidder and said a further announcement would be made "as soon as practicable". Last year, Nobo lifted its pre-tax profits 8 per cent from £2.7m to £2.93 million, on sales of £50.2 million (£40.5 million).

Reunion incurs loss

REUNION MINING registered a loss of £3.7 million in the year to end December, equal to a loss per share of 10.6p, a fall on the 6.0p loss per share in the previous year and the £1.9 million pre-tax loss. Reunion also said that a feasibility study on the Skorpion zinc deposit in Southern Namibia had now commenced. The result of a full study is expected by the middle of 1998, although the development of a mining operation would take about two years, putting the start of production in the latter half of the year 2000. The shares rose 12½p to 138p.

Arcadian in hotel deal

ARCADIAN INTERNATIONAL, the hotels and property development company, announced joint-venture arrangements for the redevelopment of the Great Eastern Hotel at Liverpool Street in London. The company will take a 125-year lease of the hotel from British Land, which has a similar agreement with Railtrack. British Land will provide £30 million of funding towards Great Eastern's redevelopment costs, Arcadian said. The hotel will close for a £43 million redevelopment this month. It is due to reopen in 1999.

Vodafone users increase

VODAFONE, which is the biggest mobile telephone operator in the UK, now has more than four million worldwide subscribers. The company said its customer base grew by 979,000 in the year to March 31, while in the UK the subscriber base was more than 2.87 million, up 415,000 in the current financial year. Chris Gent, Vodafone's chief executive, said: "In the UK Vodafone remains the market leader both in turnover and in numbers of subscribers."

Tuskar's African deal

TUSKAR RESOURCES, the Dublin oil and gas exploration and production company, announced yesterday that it had signed a memorandum of understanding with Camac International (Nigeria) to acquire its net production revenue interest in the Upokid field, located offshore, Nigeria. Tuskar Resources said the consideration will be met through the issue of ordinary shares in the company at a price to be negotiated on completion of an independent valuation.

Premiere expands

PREMIERE, the education and business training group, raised pre-tax profits from £408,000 to £792,000 in the year to December 31. Earnings per share rose from 13p to 16.9p, out of which a maiden dividend of 4p will be paid. Dorian Marks, joint managing director, said: "The year was one of satisfying success and 1997 has started with turnover ahead of budget and further advances in profitability achieved." The company continued to expand, with branches in Leeds and Warrington.

Insurance joint venture

LAMBERT FENCHURCH, the insurance broker, has formed a German general insurance joint venture with Pantanien, for £1.67 million plus the share capital of Lowndes Lambert Deutschland. Pantanien is based in Hamburg and has offices in Düsseldorf, Munich and Monaco. Lambert Fenchurch will acquire 40 per cent of Pantanien, whose yacht insurance broking company will remain wholly under Harald Baum, its chairman.

Gaskell advances

GASKELL, the floor coverings group, raised pre-tax profits from £507,000 to £1.2 million last year on sales up from £39.1 million to £43.7 million. Earnings rose from 11.4p to 16.4p, allowing the total dividend to rise from 4.5p to 4.8p after a rise in the final from 3.0p to 3.2p. The company said that despite the current political and economic uncertainties it was confident that the group had established a solid foundation from which to achieve further profitable growth in the future.

Gas discounts ruling close

By CHRISTINE BUCKLEY
INDUSTRIAL CORRESPONDENT

THE gas regulator is expected to rule shortly on British Gas's plans to cut prices in the South West, amid industry pressure that the company should be forced to keep its current tariffs and relinquish more market share.

Controversy is mounting over the company's decision to go ahead and offer the 12 per cent discount in letters to its direct debit customers in the region. One rival gas company said that cancellations on its contracts increased 50 per cent when the offer was made.

Centrica, the new corporate name for the domestic half of the old British Gas, said that there was nothing to prevent it offering the discount before the regulator's ruling. If Clare Spottiswoode outlaws the discount then the company will have to stop the offer, although it will be able to



Clare Spottiswoode is looking at the cut-price offer

honour deals already agreed. Roy Stone, of the Gas Consumers Council in the South West, said: "We are deeply unhappy about this. How British Gas has gone ahead with this offer despite the regulator's investigation beats me." The Office of Gas Supply, Ofgas, says that it is powerless

to prevent the initial offer, but would be able to prohibit its further circulation after the ruling.

The ruling will be decided on whether or not competition has been established. Centrica will say that it has. Rivals, who fear that customers will slip back to British Gas quick-

ly if the company is allowed to discount, will say it has not and that the former monopoly should be further handicapped to establish proper competition.

Nell Lambert, joint general manager of Calorflex, the largest independent supplier of domestic gas, said: "Competition is at risk of being killed before it has properly started if British Gas can lower its prices now. It still has the vast majority of the market. That cannot be seen as competitive. It needs to be restrained further, as it was in the industrial market."

Ms Spottiswoode has never set a target for the loss of market share she wants to see before endorsing price cuts from British Gas. In the South West about 100,150 homes have left British Gas for competitors - 20 per cent of the total. The regulator must decide whether such a transfer constitutes a competitive market.

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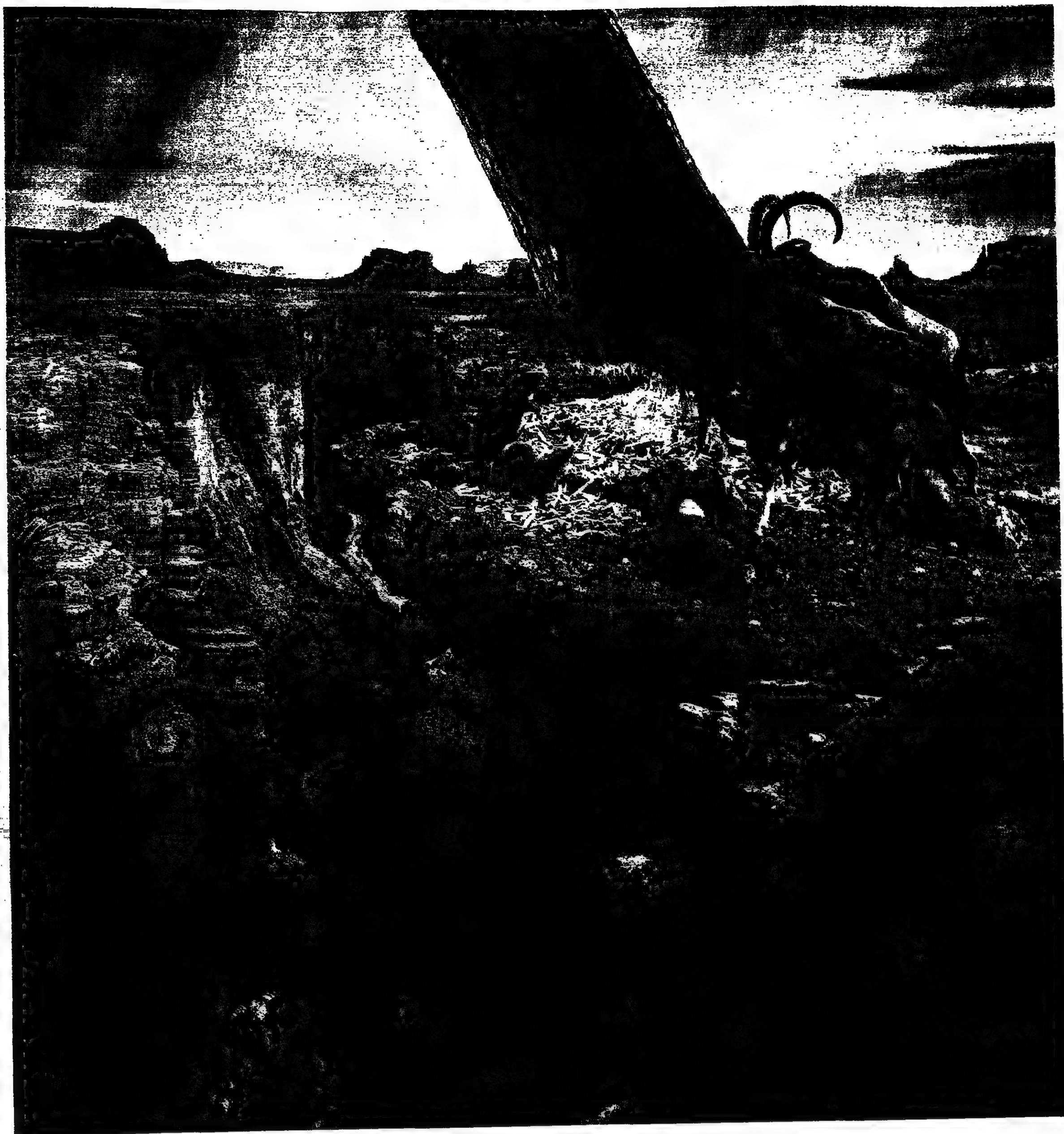
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FILM

From 'natural born killer' to king of porn, Woody Harrelson has no qualms about his new image



THEATRE

Steve Livermore's disappointing new play *Skank* charts a day in the life of six East London delinquents

THE TIMES ARTS



RISING STAR

Two years after leaving university David Eldridge has two plays behind him and a third in the West End



TOMORROW

Colin Firth stars as the obsessed Arsenal fan in the week's big new cinema release, *Fever Pitch*

Nice guy in a dirty business

CINEMA: Carol Allen talks to Woody Harrelson about his transition from goofy barman to the porn king Larry Flynt

According to Woody Harrelson, who plays him in the forthcoming film *The People vs Larry Flynt*, America's most infamous pornographer is "a really likeable guy with a great sense of humour".

Larry Flynt is the Kentucky redneck strip-club owner who founded the raunchy *Hustler* magazine in the 1970s, and eventually took his right to publish it to the Supreme Court of the United States. It was a publication which brought Flynt into constant conflict with the obscenity laws, resulted in his being gunned down and left wheelchair-bound during one of those obscenity trials, and ultimately cast him as the unlikely champion of free speech through his successful appeal to the Supreme Court under the First Amendment to the US Constitution.

Flynt was also a womaniser, despite his devotion to his equally promiscuous fourth wife Althea, with whom he also indulged in drug abuse. And he became notorious for his flamboyant and disrespectful courtroom antics involving the American flag. "There are

a lot of rags-to-riches stories but none really quite like his. It's a uniquely American story in a way," Harrelson says, then laughs as he realises the implications of his remark.

Not surprisingly, Milos Forman's film, which opens in Britain next week, has created controversy, not just in terms of opposition from the right-wing moralists with whom Flynt did battle, but also from the Left, most particularly the feminist writer Gloria Steinem, who has protested that the film sanitises Flynt as a genial rascal, rather than showing him as a sleazy exploiter of female flesh.

Also not surprisingly, Harrelson denies these accusations. "I don't think it makes him a hero. Everything our society could possibly say negatively about somebody, it depicts in the movie. It portrays him very accurately. I think there are a lot of people who have probably decided they don't want to see it no matter how good anyone says it is, and that is unfortunate because they're missing a great movie."

Before filming began, Harrelson spent a lot of time with Flynt, questioning him closely



Bartender, serial killer and now peddler of female flesh: Woody Harrelson, star of the soon-to-be-released *The People vs Larry Flynt*, has played them all in his acting career

about his life — including his first sexual experience. "It was actually with a chicken! Not the farm animal I would have picked, but you have to give him credit for being honest about that. He's a very candid guy, you know. That's something I might well have kept quiet about."

In his own persona, Harrelson demonstrates much of the candour and charm with which he makes the character of Flynt palatable on screen. Though his thinning hair is cut close to his skull, those wide blue eyes, the reassuringly homely country drawl and big sunny grin are unchanged from the days when he played his lovable and naive namesake in the hit television series *Cheers*.

He also demonstrates an appealing modesty. When asked why Forman chose him for the role, he says: "Milos said, 'Bring me the most white trash actor in Hollywood,' so here I am."

It was that "poor white trash" quality that Oliver Stone (who was co-producer of *The People vs Larry Flynt*) used so effectively in another controversial movie, *Natural Born Killers*. In Stone's film, Harrelson's appealing image was again exploited in an effort to make an unpalatable character and story acceptable to a wider public. Though here, too, Harrelson argues

that the film was misunderstood by many people. "We saw it as a dark, over-the-top satirical comedy," he explains.

However, it is interesting to note the number of other less than admirable characters he has played since *Cheers*: the yuppie husband who sells a night with his wife in *Indecent Proposal*; the transit cop turned robber in *The Money Train*; and the self-satisfied kidnapped doctor in Michael Cimino's recent New Age flop *The Sunchaser*. So were these deliberate career choices to get away from the lovable Woody image, or has he been the object of producers making calculated casting decisions to improve the appeal of difficult characters?

"Maybe both," he says. "I kind of take things as they come and like to do different things. I don't think of it as a big effort to get away from Woody. I wouldn't mind playing a simple, loving character again. And certainly it could be argued that, with each successive role, it looks like I've been trying to erode

what's left of my fan base from the *Cheers* days."

Easy though it would be to take Harrelson's candid and sunny manner at face value, there is a darker side to his life. Born in Texas 35 years ago, Harrelson and his two broth-

ers were raised in Idaho by their mother. At seven, he discovered that his absent father was in prison, convicted of a contract killing. Ten years later Harrelson Sr was imprisoned again for a second murder. His son, too, has had his wilder days, though they amounted to a more modest

indulgence in wine, women and song.

However, all that appears to be behind him now, in favour of a simple, rather New Age lifestyle with his partner Laura and their two young daughters. Home, when he is not filming, is a four-roomed house in Costa Rica. Wherever he is in the world, he never misses his daily yoga session.

The New Age Harrelson also likes to dress in natural fibres, with a preference for hemp — though as he proudly draws attention to his Armani hemp jacket, you tend to think this is the simple life with a distinctly well-heeled slant. And though he has gone over to a largely vegan diet, he is still no party pooper when he meets up occasionally with old chums from *Cheers* days. "I tip the odd pint. Guinness is my beverage of choice."

Although Harrelson would like to spend more time indulging his love of music with his sometime band — "a cross between folk, rock 'n' roll, rockabilly, rhythm and blues and country, with a little bit of

jazz in there too" — for the moment he has a full slate of films coming up. Last summer he played an American journalist in Michael Winterbottom's *Welcome to Sarajevo*, loosely based on ITN journalist Michael Nicholson's book. He recently completed a supporting role in David Mamet and Barry Levinson's *Wag the Dog* — "It's a political satire, so that, too, will probably be misunderstood," he jokes. And this month he starts work on a new film by Volker Schlöndorff.

Although he bears with equanimity the fact that he failed to add an Oscar to his Golden Globe for *Larry Flynt* — he correctly forecast that the award would go to Geoffrey Rush — he does have one regret about last month's event. He turned down a role in *The English Patient*.

"They sent me that script and I just didn't get it. I just couldn't see what the movie was going to do. I really bombed out over that."

● *The People vs Larry Flynt* opens in Britain on April 11

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The ROYAL OPERA

THEATRE: Steve Livermore's new play; plus mime

Drugs, squalor, no big deal

STEVE LIVERMORE has devoured Irvine Welsh's collected works and regurgitated his own version of *Trainspotting* on stage.

Set in and around a tower block on an East London estate, the play charts a day in the life of six average delinquents, 500 pills, one used 1950s villain and a children's clown called Kevin.

Livermore leads the light brigade himself. He plays a small-time drug dealer, Dave, who has to gather an impossible amount of money to repay a loan shark, apparently modelled on Ronnie Kray. Muttering vague threats into a mobile phone, the writer, producer and director shuffles around the bare stage in his flashy trainers like a shy

Skank
Old Red Lion, ECI

sixth-former who would rather be elsewhere.

The rest of the cast can only shine by comparison. Back in the tower block, mad Colin and obnoxious Bill get drunk on vodka and crazy on pills. Andy, our narrator and Dave's flatmate, tries to glue a story from this debris. Like *Kevin* in the film version of *Trainspotting*, his most significant contribution to the plot, however, is to have his nose broken by Russell Levy's amusing hit man, Gas.

Livermore's one kernel of inspiration comes, predictably, at the end. In a bout of

creative desperation to find a finale to his play, he turns Gas into a clown-loving psychopath who manages to blow his own head off in a juggling routine. If the company had taken all their cues from this moment of infectious lunacy, *Skank* might have strayed into the surreal and wonderful realm of *The People Show*. The young actors of Trust Theatre Company, all graduates of East 15, at least have one thing on their side. Time.

The programme says that a main aim of this production (let's face it, the only aim) is to try to create enough interest in *Skank* to turn it into a film. In your dreams.

JAMES CHRISTOPHER

Body building

Honestly
Young Vic Studio

IF YOU want to make physical theatre, one of your first moves is likely to be an inquiry at the door of the esteemed French mime teacher Jacques Lecoq. The members of Hoïpolloi Theatre have beaten a path to Paris, and are now applying Lecoq's principles in this country.

Perhaps the most difficult bridge to build is that between the skills of the body and the more elusive crafts of storytelling and dramatisation. With *Honestly*, the company gets about halfway across. Paul, played by Shân Dale-Jones, takes a room in an apartment block. Three other performers play a variety of oddball characters: landlady, cleaning lady, other tenants in the building. Paul is initially unable to find his room in the maze of corridors. When he does, it dematerialises amid a swirl of encounters with these peculiar residents.

There are wisps of Kafka here, but the performers never quite home in on them, preoccupied with creating caricatures rather than developing content. Lecoq teaches that less is more. Living up to this dictum is some task.

Stefanie Müller, who also performs, provides a nicely minimal set: three tall right angles which, when standing, suggest a warren of doors and corridors and give the performers just enough space to hide and change behind. There is a neat shift at the end

when these thin corners are turned back to their positions at the start of the show, suggesting the ridges of the apartment block's roof. Paul's natural home is on top of the building rather than inside it, and the final image seems like a nod to the closing scene of *Deti påissen*, the splendidly eccentric French film which ends with the protagonist playing his saw like a cello on the roof at night.

Honestly shares with *Deti påissen* a nose for the absurd, without following it to the logically grotesque or existential conclusions. The programme suggests that the company took the words "fetishism, obsession and voyeurism" as their starting points, along with the apartment block. The dwelling is suitably evoked, but there is a curious timidity about the rest.

ANDY LAVENDER

GREAT BRITISH HOPES

Rising stars in the arts firmament

DAVID ELDRIDGE

Age: 23

Profession: Playwright

Rapid progress: Less than two years after graduating from Exeter University with a degree in drama and English, Eldridge has a play staged in the West End. *Summer Begins* (at the Donmar Warehouse until Saturday) follows the 1996 Bush production of his debut, *Serving It Up*, praised by critics for "confident theatricality" and "verbal swagger".

What's the story? *Summer Begins* follows a month in the lives of four working-class twentysomethings from Barking: two sisters and their respective boyfriends. "It's a character-led play about the ordinariness of life in the suburbs."

Write about what you know: His plays are all set in familiar territory. "I grew up in Romford, which is close to Barking, and *Serving It Up* takes place on a council estate in Hackney, which is where my parents come from." His *A Week with Tony*, also seen on the London fringe last year, features upper-middle-class Tories not unlike the people Eldridge studied with as a scholar at an Essex private school.

Why did he start writing? "When I arrived at Exeter, I was gagging to be a director. But I realised there were things I wanted to say that I couldn't express by interpreting someone else's work."

Mentor: "Peter Thomson, professor of drama at Exeter, has a great passion for new writing and encouraged me to send *Serving It Up* to London theatres, including the Bush."

Influences and heroes: "Philip Larkin's ideas about the impossibility of marriage struck a chord that I want to explore. I admire David Hare for his massive sweep, and Trevor Griffiths for combining the epic with gritty detail."

Does he keep a close watch on directors? "You hear of writers who get in the way during rehearsals, but I don't. The writer should just be a source of information and support."

Coming soon: He is already revising play number four, provisionally titled *Cold Fallen Heart*, which explores the relationship between an electrician and a social worker. His first film script is also under way. "It's called *The Tall Boy*, but I don't want to say anything about it yet."

DANIEL ROSENTHAL





POP

In Dublin, several thousand happily thirtysomethings go crazy for the Beautiful South



CHOICE 1

Alan Howard offers a rare live performance of the writings of Homer

THE TIMES ARTS



CHOICE 2

Ben Elton's new comedy *Popcorn* opens its West End run



CHOICE 3

Pianist Richard Clayderman gives his only Scottish concert in Glasgow

POP: While the fans go wild in Dublin, in Glasgow they stay pretty unmoved



Musical chairs: they can't dance, they look demure, so the secret of Beautiful South's success must be their supremely polished, adult pop songs

Despite being a long-time admirer of Paul Heaton, I have to admit that there are occasions when I gasp in amazement at the sheer scale of the Beautiful South's popularity.

One such moment was on hearing the news that their greatest hits collection, *Carry On Up the Charts*, had sold more than two million copies in Britain alone. Another was observing several thousand happily thirtysomethings screaming stagwaders in adoration or indulging in mass arm-waving during *The Sound of North America* — which is not even a "greatest hit" but an album track.

It's not that their music is without merit — far from it — but Heaton's lyrics always struck me as a little too self-consciously clever and know-

It's all in the eye of the beholder

ing ever to compete on a commercial level with the likes of Oasis and Celine Dion. I was wrong.

The teenybopper-style hysteria is just as puzzling. Jacqueline Abbott, dressed in a black leather trenchcoat and sensible trousers, is demure and unaffectedly shy. One gets the impression that she would feel uncomfortable singing a song at her best friend's birthday party, never mind in the UK's largest pop venues — which is where she's heading.

The Beautiful South

The Point, Dublin

And she can't dance, so a career as the sixth Spice Girl looks unlikely.

Nor are the male vocalists in the band likely to upset Boyzone's wall calendar sales. Dave Hemmings was a bright orange raincoat and a black woolly hat. Blue was the colour of Heaton's winter coat, and he wore runners as

white as washing powder...

So the secret of their success must be in the songs. The instantly hummable *We Are Each Other*, which opened the show, or the incurably catchy *You Keep It All In* seemed to suggest as much.

Indeed, the Beautiful South make supremely polished, adult pop music that, the odd swear word notwithstanding, is ostensibly tailor-made for daytime radio. But there's no getting away from Heaton's barbed lyrics. The sly innu-

endo and bawdy sexual metaphors of the disgruntled prostitute in *Mirror*, for example, would not, one would imagine, be to everyone's taste, and yet one of the main criticisms levelled at the Beautiful South is that they're too tasteful. Personally, I preferred Heaton when he played the Christian socialist card in the House-martins, a band who never overdid on irony and smart wordplay.

Indeed, the highlight of the set was arguably his stirring version of *Lean on Me*, where Heaton's yearning, mournful falsetto evoked the spirit of the great Smokey Robinson.

And to be honest, despite the use of occasional video clips, the show definitely lacked something as a spectacle. But those screaming thirtysomethings would disagree.

NICK KELLY

Impeccably cool street credentials

NEW YORK trio the Fun Lovin' Criminals make music as smooth as their impeccably cool, cartoon-gangster image. Their regurgitated bandstand singer Huey is a former juvenile offender and US Marine who, for reasons of his own, keeps his surname a strict secret. Though born of Irish and Puerto Rican blood, Huey has the look and mannerisms of a young Robert De Niro, rapping his comical fables of Manhattan streetlife over the catchy cocktails of funk, jazz and 1970s hard rock which form the core of the band's excellent debut album *Come Find Yourself*.

According to their carefully manufactured personal mythology, this dapper threesome graduated to performing

via jobs as bouncers and bartenders in various hip New York clubs. Which might explain why they seemed to be playing much of their Glasgow set on Friday to some smoky late-night basement rather than a cavernous hall pecked with 2,000 rock fans. Huey's rasping monologues were only half audible at the best of times, while the music remained a trifle too intimate and downbeat to project very far across the vast Barrowland ballroom.

While such minor problems could easily be corrected with a fuller sound and a dash more showmanship, the Criminals also seemed to exhaust their

Fun Lovin' Criminals

Glasgow Barrowland

repertoire of musical tricks not long into the evening. Following the thunderous, trumpet-driven romp of their theme song, the laid-back groove of *Smoke 'Em*, the set seemed to lose momentum and lapse into a succession of stoned raps and meandering instrumental jams.

Only with the overdue airing of the band's breakthrough single, *Scotch Snacks*, a playfully lolling paean to the joys of robbing banks on Valium, was something akin to hysteria finally generated among this patient crowd. The trio's current single, *The King of New York*, was also rapturously re-

ceived, but the warmest reaction of the night went to a beautifully measured cover version of John Barry's elegant James Bond theme, *We Have All the Time in the World*. Huey's guitar was an understated shimmer, his vocal a softly glowing homage to the sublime Louis Armstrong original. As the applause died down, he rewarded himself by swigging from a bottle of champagne with all the swaggering panache of a victorious prizefighter.

Thus the Fun Lovin' Criminals eventually acquitted themselves in Glasgow. But as to whether such uneven flashes of brilliance constitute a truly great show, the jury is still out.

STEPHEN DALTON

LONDON

ENGLISH CHAMBER ORCHESTRA: Harry Christophers conducts an all-French programme, starting with Ravel's *Le tombeau de Couperin* and ending with Fauré's *Requiem*. The concert is part of the English Chamber Orchestra's 50th anniversary celebrations. 8pm, Royal Albert Hall, London WC2A 1AL. Tickets: 0171-494 5454.

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TODAY'S CHOICE

A daily guide to arts and entertainment compiled by Gillian Maizey

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TODAY'S CHOICE

A daily guide to arts and entertainment compiled by Gillian Maizey

ELSEWHERE: *Bury St Edmunds*: Inaugural festival of the town's 1,000th anniversary. 8pm, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk. Tickets: 01284 785000.

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FESTIVALS

From an exhibition of works by the late Derek Jarman in Thessaloniki, Cultural Capital of Europe...



FESTIVALS

...and Marianne Faithfull singing to the faithful at Bergen's international bash in Norway...



THE TIMES ARTS

FESTIVALS

...to Riccardo Muti joining the musical contingent on hand for the festivities in Vienna...



FESTIVALS

...and Anne Sofie von Otter in Berlin: we offer a selection of the summer's best arts events around Europe



From Utrecht to St Petersburg, Gillian Maxey selects the biggest and best festivals across the Continent

Six months of Euro jamborees

Thessaloniki, Cultural Capital of Europe '97: The Greek Byzantine port presents a Festival of Ideas, incorporating music, theatre, literature, painting, sculpture, cinema and dance. An international programme includes exhibitions of works by Caravaggio, Michelangelo, Goya and Derek Jarman. Artists include the Berlin Radio Symphony Orchestra, Beijing Opera, Kyoto Symphony Orchestra and Royal Winnipeg Ballet. All year: 105 Vassilissa Olga Avenue, 546-43 Thessaloniki Hellas (3031.867.860)

Flanders: More than 300 concerts and performances at cathedrals, castles, abbeys and baroque theatres in Antwerp, Bruges, Ghent, Mechelen and other towns. Mstislav Rostropovich conducts *Romeo and Juliet* in Brussels (September 10-October 26). Anne-Sophie Mutter plays Brahms's violin sonatas. Until October: Flanders Festival, Kasteel Borluut, Kleie Gentstraat 46, B-9051 Sint-Denijs-Westrem (32.9.2439494)

Monte Carlo: Springtime on the Riviera, when young soloists join celebrities such as Montserrat Caballé, Murray Perahia and Mstislav Rostropovich in a glittering programme of classical music, ballet, theatre and jazz. Until May 5: Printemps des Arts, 8 rue Louis-Notari, MC-98000, Monaco (377.92162299)

Schwetzingen: Opera, ballet and classical concerts in the intimate settings of the rococo theatre and castle. *La Didone*, *Così fan tutte*, Margaret Price, Concerto Köln and Schubert's bicentenary. April 26-June 1: Schwetzingen Festspiele GmbH, Postfach 106040, D-70049 Stuttgart, Germany (49.711.929303)

Bergen: French music and theatre, young talents, new Norwegian music and early music. Recitals and chamber music concerts in the homes of Grieg, Ole Bull and Harald Sæverud. Outdoor theatre, literature, folk dancing and visual art. Performances by musician-in-residence Laila Ove Andenes, Cloud Gate Dance Theatre of Taiwan, Opera-Comique from Paris — and Marianne Faithfull. May 21-June 1: Bergen International Festival, Box 183, N-5001 Bergen (47.5531270)

Brescia-Bergamo: Andrés Schiff, Gerhard Oppitz and Louis Lortie are among the pianists playing music by Brahms, Schubert and



Anne-Sophie Mutter: sure to give her all at Prague Spring

Mendelssohn in two of Lombardy's ancient towns. May 3-June 25: Festival Pianistico Internazionale di Brescia e Bergamo, c/o Teatro Grande, 1-25121 Brescia, Italy (39.30.2930220)

Dresden: The programme has as its theme *Italians in Dresden*. Operas by Puccini, Donizetti, Wagner and Mozart include *Roberto Devereux* and *Le nozze di Figaro*. Reinhard Goebel conducts *Musica Antiqua* (Köln in music by Albinoni, Lotti and Ristoni and, in a solo recital, soprano Edda Moser performs lieder by Cherubini, Schubert and Strauss. May 17-June 1: Dresdner Musikfestspiele, Postfach 202723, D-01193 Dresden (49.351.4866.307)

Florence: Maggio Musicale Wagner's *Parafal* and Puccini's *Turandot* in the Teatro Comunale. Concerts by the Philadelphia Orchestra (conductor Wolfgang Sawallisch) and the Orchestra e Coro del Maggio Musicale Fiorentino (Giuseppe Sinopoli and Zubin Mehta among the guest conductors). Dancing in the Piazza della Signoria, and a retrospective of leading Chinese film director Zhang Yimou.



The Salzburg festival in July once again pays homage to the operas and orchestral works of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, the enchanting city's most famous son

May 3-July 2: Maggio Musicale Fiorentino, Teatro Comunale, Via Solferino 15, I-50123 Firenze, Italy (39.55.211158)

Holland: The festival celebrates its golden jubilee, and the music of Matthijs Vermeulen and Maurice Kagel. Valery Gergiev, Gennadi Rozhdestvensky and Hartmut Haenchen among the conductors. Premieres of Wim Lantman's opera *Agamemnon* and works by choreographers Mats Ek and Hans van Manen. June 1-30: Holland Festival Information, Kleine-Gartmanplantsoen 21, NL-1017 RP Amsterdam, Netherlands (31.20.6276566)

Prague Spring: A treat for classical music aficionados. The Prague Symphony, London Symphony, St Petersburg Philharmonic and Czech Philharmonic figure in the strong orchestral line-up. Anne-Sophie Mutter, Alfred Brendel and Gustav Leonhardt are among the soloists, as well as a Petr Eben world premiere. The Dvořák String Quartet Festival takes place from September 1-9. May 12-June 2: Prague Spring Festival, Heltichova 18, CA-118 00 Praha 1, Czech Republic (42.2.53344)

Schubertiade: Some of the most distinguished exponents of chamber music celebrate the 200th anniversary of Schubert's birth at Feldkirch and Schwarzenberg in Austria and Lindau and Achberg, across the border in Germany. Barbara Bonney, Andrés Schiff, Alfred Brendel, Franz Welser-Möst and Anne Sofie von Otter are among the celebrity performers. In the castle at Achberg, the Schubert 200 exhibition includes manuscripts such as *Winterreise* and *Death and the Maiden*, paintings inspired by Schubert's life and his work, the latest findings of academic research and films about the composer. May 3-September 7: Schubertiade GmbH, Villa Rosenthal, Schweizer Strasse 1, A-6845 Hohenems, Postfach 100 (05.5.7672091)

Vienna: Opera, theatre and music on a grand scale. Nikolaus Harnoncourt conducts the Chamber Orchestra of Europe in Schubert's *Alfonso and Estrella*. Theatrical productions include *Richard III* and Peter Zadek's version of Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland*. Simon Rattle, Riccardo Muti and Murray Perahia are part of an exceptional musical contingent. May 9-June 22: Wiener Festwochen, Lehdgasse 11, A-1060 Wien, Austria (43.1.589220)

May 3-July 2: Maggio Musicale Fiorentino, Teatro Comunale, Via Solferino 15, I-50123 Firenze, Italy (39.55.211158)

Barcelona: Highlights of Greg 97 include dance from Wim Vandekeybus, DV8 and Sasha Waltz, theatre from Thomas Bernhard and Lluís Cunill, music from Barcelona 216. Flamenco is the subject of an exhibition. June 25-July 31: Summer Festival of Barcelona Greg 97, Institut de Cultura, Ajuntament de Barcelona, La Rambla, 99 4a pl, E-08003 Barcelona (34.3.3017755)

Budapest: Opera, chamber, choral, folk, pop and rock music, plus ballet. June-August: Budapest Open Air Summer Festival, Interart Festivalcenter, PO Box 80, H-1366 Budapest, Hungary (36.1.1179838)

Drottningholm: Seventeenth-century opera, colourful costumes and spectacular fireworks light up the



Anton Chekhov: Uncle Vanya set for Zurich and Bregenz

18th-century stage. Jacopo Peri's *Euridice* and Luigi Rossi's *Orfeo*, performed for the first time in Sweden, preceded by the ballet *Harlequins and Robbers*. June 1-August 24: Drottningholms Slottsteater, Box 27050, S-102 51 Stockholm, Sweden (46.8.6608225)

Ravenna: Music, opera and dance in the Byzantine port. Opera: Valery Gergiev conducts the Kirov's production of Boris Godunov. Dance with the Béjart Ballet Lausanne. Spiritual music from the Chicago Children's Choir. Riccardo Muti extends a bridge of friendship by conducting concerts in both Ravenna and the former Yugoslavia. June 19-July 26: Ravenna Festival, Via Dante Alighieri 1, I-49100 Ravenna, Italy (39.544.213995)

St Petersburg White Nights: The midnight sun shines on a programme of opera, ballet and concerts in the Maryinsky Theatre (formerly the Kirov). Valery Gergiev and the Kirov Opera join in the festivities. Last two weeks of June: (in-tourist 0171-538 8600; Page 8 May 0116-252 4433)

Spoletto: Multi-arts festival in the medieval hill town, featuring opera (Handel's *Semele*), symphonic and chamber music concerts (Richard Hickox conducts Mendelssohn's *Elia*), dance (Dein Perry's *Tap Dogs*, Dance Theatre of Harlem), theatre, art and cinema. June 25-July 13: Associazione Festival del Due Mondi, Via Cesare Beccaria 18, I-00196 Roma, Italy (39.473.407001 44235)

Zurich: Productions in the Opera House include Schubert's *Des Teufels Lustschloss*, and the first Swiss performance of Puccini's opera, *Le Villi*, in a double-bill with Leoncavallo's *Pagliacci*. Visiting theatrical companies to the Schauspielhaus include Thalia Theater Hamburg and the Deutsche Theater Berlin with productions of Chekhov's *Uncle Vanya* and Kleist's *Der zerbrochene Krug*. The musical emphasis is on Brahms, Mahler and Schubert, with performances by Les Arts Florissants, the Chamber Orchestra of Europe and the Sächsische Staatskapelle Dresden in the Tonhalle. *Birth of the Cool*, an exhibition of American painting from Georgia O'Keeffe to Christopher Wool, goes on display in the Kunsthaus. June 28-July 20: Zürcher Festspiele, Postfach 6036, CH-8023 Zürich (41.1.2154030)

Aix-en-Provence: Innovation and tradition meet in a bold programme of opera and classical concerts, drawn mainly from the Mozart repertoire. Performances in the courtyard of the 18th-century Archbishop's Palace and the cloister of St Sauveur Cathedral. July: Festival International d'Art Lyrique et de Musique, Palais de l'ancien Archevêché, F-13100 Aix-en-Provence, France (33.442173434)

Bayreuth: Established in 1876 and unique among festivals in its devotion to one composer, Richard Wagner. Operas in rotation, topped and tailed by *Tristan und Die Meistersinger*. July 25-August 28: Bayreuther Festspiele GmbH, Postfach 100262, D-95402 Bayreuth, Germany (49.921.78780)

Bregenz: Gotz Friedrich's new production of Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess* aboard the vast floating stage on Lake Constance. Premiere of Rubinstein's *Der Dämon* in the festival house. Music from the Vienna and Dallas symphony orchestras and drama from the Deutsches Theater, Berlin, including *Uncle Vanya*. July 17-August 21: Bregenzer Festspiele, Kärntenstrasse 311, A-6901 Bregenz, Austria (43.5574.407-4)

Gstaad: Chamber music and recitals in Saanen church, orchestra



José Carreras: one gentleman in Verona, singing *Carmen*

trials in the giant marquee. Gidon Kremer, Tabca Zimmermann, Yuri Bashmet among the soloists. Quartets include the Leipzig, Brodsky and Chilingirian. Founder Yehudi Menuhin's son, Jeremy, conducts the Estonian National Orchestra in a programme of film music. July 18-September 6: Musiksommer Gstaad-Saanenland, Chalet Rialto, Postfach 382, CH-3780 Gstaad, Switzerland (41.33.7488338)

Kuhmo: Chamber music by Monteverdi, Vivaldi, Beethoven, Boccherini, Dvořák and Bartók is billed alongside new commissions from Kimmo Hakola and Einjuhani Rautavaara, and works by more than 70 American composers. July 13-27: Kuhmo Chamber Music Festival, Torikatu 39, FIN-38900 Kuhmo, Finland (358.8.6520936)

Orange Opera: *Luca di Lammermoor*, *Tristan und Isolde* and *Turandot* (with Barbara Hendricks and Simon Estes) performed against the magnificent backdrop of the Roman amphitheatre, with its

splendid acoustics. Roberto Alagna and Angela Gheorghiu in concert. July 12-August 5: Chorégies d'Orange, BP 205, F-84107 Orange Cedex, France (33.49.0518383)

Salzburg: Mozart's birthplace reverberates to the sound of his music. Operatic highlights include *La Clemenza di Tito*, *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* and *Pelléas et Mélisande*. Recitals by Jessye Norman, Thomas Hampson, Dawn Upshaw and Ann Murray. Orchestras led by Mariss Jansons, Bernard Haitink, Kent Nagano, Claudio Abbado, etc. July 19-August 31: Salzburger Festspiele, Postfach 140, A-5010 Salzburg, Austria (43.662.8045-0)

Savonlinna: A month of operas and concerts in the courtyard of Olavinlinna Castle. This year — the 85th — includes the world premiere of a new Finnish opera, *Aleksis Kivi*, and a new production of Leoncavallo's *Pagliacci* and Mascagni's *Cavalleria rusticana*. The Maryinsky Theatre performs *Prince Igor* and Peter Schreier sings Bach. July 5-August 4: Savonlinna Opera Festival, Olavininkatu 27, FIN-57130 Savonlinna, Finland (358.15.476750)

Schleswig-Holstein: International orchestras and soloists embark on a musical journey via the European Romantics. Classical Vienna and Norway to 35 venues across the most northerly state in Germany. July 4-August 31: Erste Lirico Arena di Verona, Piazza Brà 28, I-37100 Verona, Italy (39.45.8051811)

Verona: The 75th festival of opera, ballet and music in the magnificent Roman arena. José Carreras and Keith Olsen share the role of Don José in *Carmen*. Zubin Mehta conducts Verdi's *Requiem Mass*, Carla Fracci dances *Macbeth*. July 4-August 31: Erste Lirico Arena di Verona, Piazza Brà 28, I-37100 Verona, Italy (39.45.8051811)

Worms: Chamber music by Monteverdi, Vivaldi, Beethoven, Boccherini, Dvořák and Bartók is billed alongside new commissions from Kimmo Hakola and Einjuhani Rautavaara, and works by more than 70 American composers. July 13-27: Kuhmo Chamber Music Festival, Torikatu 39, FIN-38900 Kuhmo, Finland (358.8.6520936)

Delft: Launch of a new chamber music festival in the atmospheric setting of the Prinsenhof, under the artistic direction of violinist Isabelle van Keulen. Two world premieres: *Songs and Games* by Smit, and *Isabelle's Hide-away* by Mendelssohn. Soloists include Gidon Kremer, Enrico Pace, Vadim Repin and Irrogon Cooper. August 2-10: Delft Chamber Music Festival, Netherlands Reservations Centre, PO Box 404, 2260 AR Leidschendam (31.70.3202500)

Helsinki: A riot of music — classical, world, jazz, pop and rock — dance, drama, literature, visual arts, computer installations and film. Conductors Salonen, Saraste, Segerstam and Mustonen direct the Finnish RSO, Helsinki Philharmonic, Avanti Chamber Orchestra and Tapiola Sinfonietta. Venues include theatres, the opera house, museums, restaurants and the prize-winning Huuhtala tent. August 22-September 7: Helsinki Festival, Rauhankatu 7 E, FIN-00170 Helsinki, Finland (358.9.1354522)

Lucerne: The theme of nostalgia is central, with the spotlight focused squarely on Schubert. On a more unusual note, Lucerne becomes the capital of whistling with a programme of concerts, lectures, lessons and films on the phenomenon. Composer Wolfgang Rihm takes up residency, while visiting orchestras include the Warsaw National Philharmonic, Philharmonia, Budapest Festival Orchestra and Dallas Symphony Orchestra. Claudio Abbado, Riccardo Chailly and Mariss Jansons among the top conductors; Martha Argerich, Andrés Schiff, Joshua Bell and Hakan Hardenberger among the illustrious soloists. August 16-September 10: Internationale Musikfestwochen Luzern, Postfach 11, CH-6002 Luzern, Switzerland (41.41.2103562)

Utrecht Early Music: Historically informed performances in medieval churches, baroque salons and modern concert venues. Music by Ockeghem and Schubert is played alongside recently discovered jewels under the theme *Music of Naples, 1400-1800*, music from Latin America, and the living tradition of Sufi music. August 29-September 7: Holland Festival of Early Music Utrecht, Postbox 734, NL-3500 AS Utrecht, Netherlands (31.30.2362236)

Aarhus: The biggest and best multi-arts fest in Scandinavia. September 6-14: Aarhus Festival, Officersbygningen, DK-8000 Aarhus C, Denmark (45.89318270)

Berlin: The Berlin orchestras share the stage with Claudio Abbado, John Eliot Gardiner, Yakov Kreizberg, et al. Bryn Terfel and Anne Sofie von Otter sing. Recitals by Maurizio Pollini and Tabca Zimmermann, chamber music from the Vogler and Arditi Quartets. September 6-30: Berliner Festspiele, GmbH, Postfach 301648, D-10748 Berlin, Germany (49.30.25489-250)

Eisenstadt: Haydn's music is fêted in the Austrian province of Burgenland. Highlights include a new fully staged production of *Il mondo della luna* and a rare opportunity to hear the oratorio *Appaluso*. Orchestral concerts in the world-famous Haydnal of the Esterházy Palace vice with chamber recitals in the neo-classical Empressal. September 11-21: Haydn Festival, Schloss Esterházy, 7000 Eisenstadt, Austria (43.6232 2407)

Monsee: Chamber music in an idyllic lakeside setting. Founder and musical director Andrés Schiff brings together musicians Peter Schreier, Robert Holl and Gidon Kremer to celebrate the music of Shostakovich, and the anniversaries of Schubert and Brahms. September 4-14: Musikstage Monsee, Postfach 3, 5310 Monsee, Austria (43.6232 2407)

Specialist travel companies include:
● Bampton Travel (0181-549 3334): Savonlinna, Verona
● Chamber Music Holidays (01202 528328): Prague Spring
● Habsburg Heritage (0181-761 0444): Eisenstadt, Monsee
● Intourist (0171-538 8600): Russia
● Page & Moy (0116-252 4433): Bregenz, Prague Spring, Ravenna, Schubertiade, St Petersburg White Nights, Verona
● Prospect Music and Art Tours (0181-995 2151): Bregenz, Eisenstadt, Prague, Monsee, Salzburg, Savonlinna, Schubertiade, Verona
● Martin Randall Travel (0181-742 3358): Drottningholm, Monsee, Prague, Salzburg, Savonlinna, Schubertiade, Verona
● Travel for the Arts (0171-483 4466): Bregenz, Chorégies d'Orange, Drottningholm, Ravenna, Savonlinna, Verona

THE TIMES
The TV
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The TV channel with a difference - predictability

Well, I'm alright Jack. Thanks to a self-taught genius of an electrician called Idris, who paced round our Welsh fields with an electronic divining rod, we now have Channel 5 bright and clear in a region so remote that neither mobile radio, FM, nor mains water can penetrate it. The Channel 5 people had advised me that my nearest sure viewing point would be Birmingham or Cardiff.

For those who can't get it, I am sorry but not very. Channel 5 was never going to be anything but a patchwork of underused wavelengths, receivable by no more than 80 per cent of the population, maximum. There is no excuse for feeling hard done by if you are out of reach of its signal, unlike BBC services for which all (with television sets) have to pay whether they get them or not.

Those who are 5-less can join the chorus now chanting "Do we need a fifth channel?" But I hope they won't. Quite apart from the fact that I like what I have seen, the question belongs in the attic with "Do we need Channel 4?", "Do we need colour television?" and "Do we need talking pictures?"

We need Channel 5 because it is there, free, terrestrial and available to the vast majority who so far have elected not to invest in a satellite dish or a cable connection. Why should they not get maximum yield out of the equipment they already own?

But is it a real increase in choice? The moral disapproval that this question needs demands a straight answer. Yes, any increase in the quantity of national television channels from four to five is a qualitative gain. Another option is now available for the many nights when four channels offer nothing of interest.

Innovative? Creative? Oh, nanny please! Britain is better served than any country I know with challenging, imaginative, risk-taking, witty, artistic, television drama, documentary and discussion. BBC2 and Channel 4 are the kind of thing they call "National Treasures" in Japan.

Channel 5 does offer something utterly different: predictability, the same thing at the same time every night. This is a service for all those who like to collapse in front of the set without consulting a computer grid of information in advance. Sameness may turn out to be more subversive than it looks. The nightly chat show offered by the same presenter is an invitation to danger, and a new ingredient in the national mix, somewhere to turn after *Newnight*. Jack Docherty won my vote on opening night with a tasteless joke about a San Diego newspaper advertising 39 anoraks for sale.

If I had to describe Channel 5 in a single word, it would not be "American", but rather "regulated". It is a creature of the Independent Television Commission. It does what it

is told to do, which is to provide the same mandatory elements - news, current affairs, children's and religious programmes - as the other two commercial terrestrial channels. Like them, Channel 5 must also produce original programming. And it may not show on average more than seven minutes of commercial an hour.

This news, moreover, must be both national and international, and of high quality. The supplier is Independent Television News, the same organisation that feeds ITV and Channel 4 news. Just because Channel 5's presenter Kirsty Young sits on a desk rather than behind it, does not mean the news will be downmarket.

It was a low blow of Channel 5 to advertise its news - every night at 8.30 followed by a film - with the boast "We don't have the annoying habit of interrupting the plot for the news". How ITV would love to give up that annoying habit! It has begged to move

News at Ten for the obvious reason that by the time a film is resumed at 10.30, most viewers are heading for bed. But the political ructions are as bad as if the question were the adoption of year-round summer time. So Channel 5 is free to hit ITV in its soft underbelly - and then some. By casting the refreshingly monotone-clad and unsmiling Young as presenter, it may have picked up a gravatar that was not expected.

Channel Five's frequent news updates could also hit the BBC where it will hurt - in the 24-hour digital news. You may have noticed that there is not much new news during the ordinary day. If a quick click to Channel 5 will give us the headlines on the hour we will have less incentive to invest in the digital gubbins to catch the BBC's version.

Whether Channel 5 will succeed, I have no idea. But I do know that it is a commercial venture, undertaken by those willing to throw more than £22 million into it on the chance that it will. If it fails, they will lose their money. If the BBC's 24-hour news fails, we will all pay through the licence fee.

Channel 5's debut leaves two conspicuous gaps in British television. Its air is young, younger even than Channel 4's. Who will provide television for the oldest? ITV has the honour and doesn't much like it. The other gap is local television. Local evening news is one of the glories or "gories" of American television, which is centred on cities rather than national broadsheets.

One of the rejected proposals for Channel 5 would have based it on British city stations, joined in a loose federal structure. But the ITC chose not to go down that road. For local television, the only hope is cable. For that you have to pay. Channel 5, if you can receive it, is something for nothing.



BRENDA MADDOX

The seven deadly days

Sex and sleaze among Tory MPs have dominated newspaper front pages for seven days and prompted accusations that the Labour Party, led by its campaign manager Peter Mandelson, is manipulating the news agenda to drown the Tory campaign.

It started last Thursday with *The Sun*'s scoop about the Tory MP Piers Merchant and his fling with a Soho nightclub hostess and the simultaneous resignation of Tim Smith, the Tory MP for Beaconsfield. They hit the headlines after several days when the election had almost disappeared from the front pages. The two stories, followed by the weekend downfall of Sir Michael Hirst, chairman of the Scottish Tories, prompted six days of sex and sleaze headlines.

On the fifth day, the question for William Rees-Mogg in *The Times* was whether the Labour Party had dirty hands. The public had been sickened by the triviality and prurience in the "sleaze election", he argued. By inviting electors to concentrate only on secondary issues, it had made British democracy seem immature and it was Labour's fault.

Mr Mandelson, singled out by Rees-Mogg as the spin-doctoring mastermind of the campaign, responded yesterday by stating that although Labour supported those Conservatives who thought that Neil Hamilton should stand down at Tatten, Labour had nothing to do with the sex and sleaze stories. Showing the felicitous touch that has earned him his reputation, he added that it was insulting to portray newspapers as "marionettes" in a media show promoted by Labour.

News editors have no wish to bore their readers, especially over an Easter weekend and before the campaign started in earnest yesterday. Yet on Saturday, Sunday, Monday, yesterday - and almost certainly this morning - sex and sleaze remained the front-page stories in the broadsheets and the Mail group. That was because Sir Michael's downfall, the refusal of Mr Merchant to stand down, and the changing signals from John Major were the best stories of the day. Only the *Express* has stud-



The next four weeks will demonstrate the effect of a week of sex and sleaze headlines on voting behaviour

PAPER ROUND

Brian MacArthur



Against the Rees-Mogg interpretation, Robert Harris argued in *The Sunday Times* that sex and sleaze were the central issues in this election, even more so than the economy. As he watched local Tory parties defying Central Office and Mr Major raging impotently about "junk" coverage, he was reminded of how tired

the Tories were and how unhealthy it was for one party to exercise an effective freehold on power. The Conservatives are decadent in the purest sense.

The next four weeks will demonstrate the effect of a week of sex and sleaze headlines on voting behaviour. With its declaration for Tony

Blair and its Piers Merchant scoop, *The Sun* has already scored two notable hits - and sparked a debate about the power of newspapers in persuading readers how to vote.

Our table measures the political allegiances of national newspaper readers so far this year (to March 17) and will be the benchmark against which that power - if it exists - can be measured during the campaign. It is based on 13,000 interviews by MORI and shows that only four of the 19 national newspapers, the *Daily* and *Sunday Times*, the *Telegraph* and *Express* groups, have an overall majority of readers who say they will vote Tory - but by much smaller margins than in 1992. The weekday paper with the biggest percentage of Tory readers is *The Daily Telegraph* on Sunday it is the *Express*. All four News International titles - *The Sun*, the *News of the World*, *The Times* and *The Sunday Times* - have an anti-Tory majority, as does the *Financial Times*. How will this change over the next four weeks?

HOW NEWSPAPER READERS INTEND TO VOTE

Percentage of readers who say they are going to vote for the main parties

	Sun	Mirror	Star	Mail	Express	Telegraph	Guardian	Times	Independent	FT
Conservative	27	18	18	48	52	57	8	41	15	48
Labour	59	79	87	34	32	27	73	38	67	45
Lib Dem	8	7	11	13	12	11	14	18	18	9
Labour lead	32	67	69	-14	-20	-30	69	-3	52	2
Sundays										
Conservative	25	18	21	47	50	55	7	38	13	7
Labour	61	75	87	35	31	42	73	38	75	75
Lib Dem	9	7	10	13	10	14	18	18	12	10
Labour lead	36	57	66	-12	-26	-37	66	-4	62	68

Source: MORI

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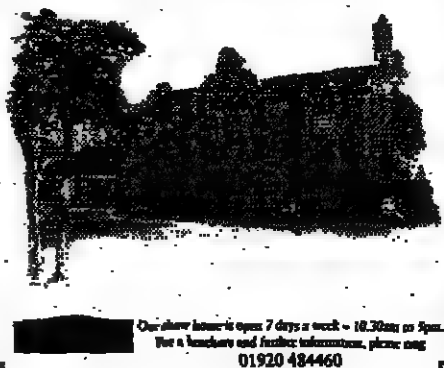
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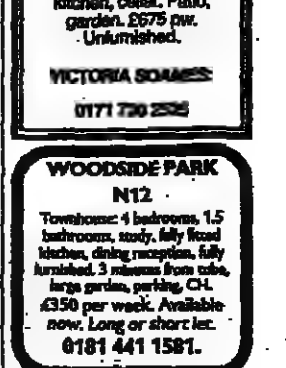
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FOOTBALL

Brown puts tight rein on bravado

By Kevin McCarrar

BRAVADO is outlawed and references to the Braveheart brand of nationalism are likely to be made only in jest, yet the Scottish players feel a rising sense of adventure. At Celtic Park this evening, for the World Cup qualifying match with Austria, they will hope to share that mood with a crowd of more than 40,000.

There was a similar attendance when Sweden were defeated at Ibrox in November and Craig Brown's side is not too far away from being an object of admiration. A lack of panache may disappoint the romantics, but most football supporters succumb, in the end, to results.

In that regard, Scotland are seductive; victory tonight will give them a seven-point lead in group four. While Austria

arose when a midfield player supported the attack.

As usual, the defusing of the opposition will be a significant part of Brown's planning for victory. Yesterday he was musing over the possibility of altering his midfield line-up.

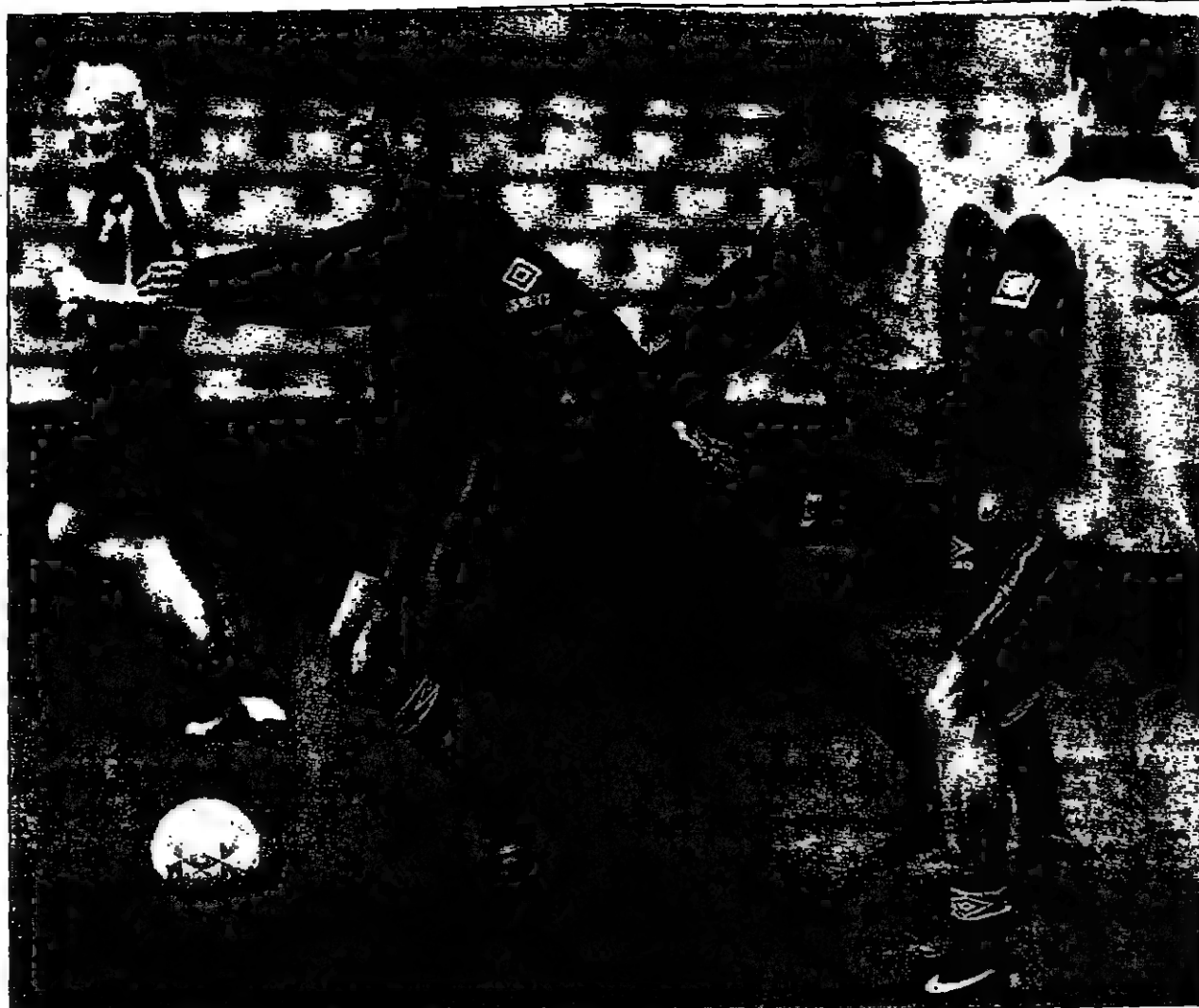
It may well be done to accommodate Paul Lambert, of Borussia Dortmund, who is suited to a holding role in front of the defence, where he could expect to encounter Andreas Herzog, Austria's best player. "I want to be positive," Brown said, in a characteristic statement, "but they are tremendous on the break."

Austria, who have already won their match in Sweden, may make the manager even more pensive than usual. Brown recalled that it was in Vienna that John McGinlay scored on his debut for Scotland, but he also suspects that the mobility of Kevin Gallacher and Darren Jackson may be more productive against a side that lost 2-0 to Slovenia in a warm-up match a fortnight ago.

and Sweden have matches in hand. Brown knows that he is closing in on achievement. "We would be in a good position," he said.

In general, though, his thoughts are fixed on the job at hand. Even Estonia, defeated 2-0 at Rugby Park on Saturday, were treated with the strategic care one might have expected to see devoted only to truly powerful opponents.

Brown's explanation for the presence of Tom Boyd on the right, an unusual position, when he scored the first goal, revealed the principles of restraint that underlie his management. The Celtic defender had been there only because it was his job to fill any gap that



John Collins, left, is kept in check by Colin Calderwood during training yesterday at Rugby Park, Kilmarnock

Townsend offers to stand down

FROM PETER BALL IN SKOPJE

AFTER the glorious days of Alexander the Great, Macedonia has been on the losing end, conquered by everybody — Romans, Byzantines, Ottomans, Bulgars and Serbs. Today, at least on the football field, Ireland hope to follow suit when they meet Macedonia in their World Cup qualifying group eight match here.

With Romania, the group leaders, winning here before Christmas and Ireland dropping a home point to Iceland, a win would give the Irish a much-needed boost before their visit to Bucharest at the end of the month. Whether April is going to be the cruellest month for Mick McCarthy, the Ireland manager, remains to be seen, but it is certainly going to be decisive for his team's World Cup hopes.

At first glance, today's task may look straightforward enough for, as well as losing 3-0 at home to Romania in December, Macedonia were ultimately well beaten by the same score in Dublin in October — but, in both cases, the scorelines are deceptive. According to McCarthy, Macedonia had been the better team against the Romanians for 40 minutes, until Romania scored.

In Dublin, too, they had had some impressive moments, as Andy Townsend, the Ireland captain, recalled. "When we beat them 3-0, I know, in the end, they didn't offer much, but for an hour the game was a tough one and I'm sure it will be here," he said yesterday. "It may not be as easy as it was in Dublin."

Townsend is taking the task seriously enough to volunteer

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Romania	1	4	0	0	18	0	12
Ireland	1	2	1	0	8	0	7
Macedonia	1	1	1	1	13	8	7
Lithuania	1	2	0	1	4	4	6
Slovakia	1	0	2	1	1	2	2
Latvia	1	0	0	3	2	29	0

to pass on his captain's armband in the search for extra encouragement for his team-mates. "I've been captain since 1991 and six years is a long time," he said. "I've loved every minute of it, but I told Mick that if he felt it could give everyone a lift and work positively, then I would stand down. I just wanted to give us something extra for these matches because it's an important month. We can't afford to lose." The offer was turned down.

Encouragingly, both Steve Staunton and Tony Casca-

rino, both of whom were doubtful with injury, emerged unscathed from a training session in Skopje's City Stadium yesterday. However, McCarthy will wait until this morning before naming his team to ensure that neither has any reaction.

The manager's main concern is that his first-choice forwards, Keith O'Neill and Cascarino, have been nursing injuries and he may be reluctant to start both. If he does select only one, it is likely to be Cascarino, who gave the Macedonians an unhappy time in Dublin and who could punish what McCarthy believes is a possible weakness in the air in Macedonia's defence.

Kinnear expands on Wimbledon empire

By Russell Kempson

IN RECENT years, Joe Kinnear's standing in English football has increased almost in proportion with the size of his girth. Though Weight Watchers have yet to enlist the Wimbledon manager for publicity purposes, Tottenham Hotspur, Celtic and Everton, among others, have been touted as future employers.

Yesterday, Kinnear sought to distance himself from such speculation. He has a contract at Wimbledon that runs until 1999, when he would complete ten years at the club, and he intends to honour it. "Reports like this occur all the time," he said. "My ambition is to do the ten years at Wimbledon. I've done seven years at the club and that's my target. The future is looking good and if we can take one more giant step, maybe we can get even better."

Portsmouth have declined to elaborate on the decision by

Vic Jenner, a director at Fratton Park, to leave the board because he was dissatisfied with the way the club was being run under the chairmanship of Terry Venables, the former England coach.

Jenner, 71, who resigned two weeks ago after three years on the board, said: "I was used to certain standards of practice, after a lifetime in business, and I believe those were not being met. I felt I had no alternative but to resign." A club spokesman said yesterday: "We have nothing more to say on the matter."

Alan Buckley, the former manager of West Bromwich Albion, is suing the first division club for compensation. Buckley was dismissed from The Hawthorns in January but has been unable to reach agreement over the amount of money owed to him. His contract was not due to expire until 1999.

ICE HOCKEY

Short-sighted policy hits British players

Norman de Mesquita looks at the effect sweeping changes have had on the game

A FEW years from now, this season will be seen as a watershed in the British game. It featured the launch of the Superleague, a flood of imports and the scrapping of the end-of-season Wembley weekend. The quality of play in the Superleague, particularly goalkeeping, has been the highest in Britain since the 1940s and 1950s, but it has been achieved by adopting a short-sighted policy that has seen the virtual disappearance of British-trained players from the country's top league.

There has been a worrying escalation in the cost of running a team in the Superleague and all eight have lost money. While Newcastle, Sheffield and especially Manchester have the sort of earning potential that can allow them to continue in the same vein, smaller sides such as Basingstoke and Blackwell have found it difficult to compete and are seeing their better players lured

away by the big-money clubs. The Superleague administration made mistakes, particularly in regard to discipline, where its hastily-compiled rules did not allow penalties to be severe enough.

The decision to move the closing stages of the play-offs to Manchester was justified when more than 14,000 turned up for Saturday's final, but many fans were unhappy with the week-long gap between the semi-finals and the final. Allowing all eight to qualify for the play-offs led to many meaningless games.

Great Britain's bid to qualify for the Olympic Games in Nagano ended when they failed to beat Switzerland in December. Peter Woods, the coach, said: "We have to bring in some newer players, look at getting some youth in our programme." Unfortunately the squad for the world championships, in Poland this month, includes 13 players in their thirties and is still dominated by Canadians.

Hamilton's men try to climb qualifying mountain

By David Maddock

BRYAN HAMILTON, the Northern Ireland manager, has made the point often, but that does not reduce its validity in assessing his country's predicament during World Cup qualifying. Group nine is, he says, the "group of death" and the point he makes is a fundamental one.

How can a team cobbled together from the less glamorous end of the FA Carling Premiership, with help from the Nationwide League, expect to emerge from a group containing the likes of Germany, Portugal and Ukraine? Especially when, at any given time, Hamilton has only about 15 fit and able players from which to choose.

Yet, victory in Kiev this evening would allow them to go equal on points at the top in the qualifying table and entertain realistic hopes of reaching the finals in France next summer. Such a result is unlikely, of course, but one should remember the performance in Germany — where Northern Ireland earned a quite momentous draw.

Hamilton will once again call upon a rag-bag bunch of journeymen this evening, drawn from clubs such as Blackpool, Stoke City and Manchester City. But the spirit generated within the squad is something special and the manager believes that his side can yet triumph.

"We have a wonderful sense of spirit and adventure within this squad," he said. "When you look at our group, it is so

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Portugal	1	2	1	0	5	2	6
Ukraine	1	2	1	0	4	2	6
Germany	1	1	1	1	4	3	5
Northern Ireland	1	1	0	2	3	5	3
Albania	1	0	1	3	1	7	1

daunting because there is so much quality in there; but we have achieved an awful lot already and we are getting better with each game that comes. If we show the same determination, the same mentality as we produced against Portugal last Saturday (0-0 in Belfast), then we can win."

However, Ukraine did once provide the backbone for impressive USSR teams; now they can call on players of genuine quality, drawn principally from Dynamo Kiev, to represent new-found freedom. Sergei Rebrov and Viktor Leonenko, in particular, have built themselves a formidable reputation in European competition in recent years, and Hamilton is under no illusions as to the size of the task ahead.

"They are a vastly underrated team, because they have genuine strength and quality," he said. "They beat Portugal at home and their record in the group is the best so far, so we know that we have a real job on our hands. I would class them as favourites to qualify along with Germany."

"But we have a very strong record away from home ourselves. We have the commitment, and we have the players to continue this adventure."

The Northern Ireland manager will welcome back Michael Hughes and Kevin Horlock from suspension, but loses Ian Nolan, through injury, for a game that they really must win. Should they fail this evening, however, it will not detract from what Hamilton and his side have already achieved.

Everton ask Watson to take care of struggle for survival

By David Maddock

EVERTON will rely on the renowned determination of Dave Watson, their veteran centre half, to deliver the four points required to stave off relegation from the FA Carling Premiership, before the search for a new manager starts in earnest in the summer. Watson, 36, was yesterday handed the role of caretaker-manager at Goodison Park until the end of the season.

He will not, however, continue in the role, despite his interest in the post. Peter Johnson, the Everton chairman, made that clear when announcing the appointment of the defender. He indicated that there would be bigger fish to fry come the close season.

"It has been spelt out that I will be manager in the short term only, and I don't mind that," Watson said. "I hope to be the new manager come the summer, but I'm under no illusions. I don't expect to stay here for ever. I think they will bring in a much bigger-name manager."

Bobby Robson, presently guiding Barcelona towards Spanish Cup and European Cup Winners' Cup finals, remains the favourite to fill the position permanently. He is unlikely to survive the "ignominy" of finishing second to Real Madrid in the Spanish League, and will probably refuse to take the post of general manager at the Catalan club. He has indicated privately that he wants to continue coaching, and will be prepared to speak to Everton in the summer.

Until then, Watson has been charged with ensuring that his successor has a Premiership club to inherit. Everton are perilously close to the relegation zone and Johnson suggested yesterday that he has more faith in the centre half producing the necessary results, than he did in the previous manager, Joe Royle, who departed last week.

"I spent the whole weekend thinking about this and I feel that Dave is well respected in the dressing-room, which will stand him in good stead over the next few weeks," he said. "We all know it is back-to-the-wall and we have to get points to survive, and he is the man to do it. I believe we've done it the right way round."

Watson will continue to play for Everton, and will be assisted by Royle's No 2, Willie Donachie. The new caretaker is interested in pursuing a career in management, but not until his playing career at Goodison draws to a natural close.

"I would like to be a manager in the long term; that is a realistic ambition of mine," he said. "But if a new manager comes in, then I would like to play on under him. I believe that I still have some time left as a player."

Celtic last night insisted that Tommy Burns will be staying as their manager. The statement came after a Glasgow newspaper claimed that Burns had offered his resignation as manager but the chairman, Fergus McCann, reiterated that the future of Burns as manager will be decided at the end of the season.

Burns was McCann's choice for the manager's job at Celtic when Lou Macari was sacked three years ago, but he has not yet been offered an extension to his contract, which is nearing completion.

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RACING: IRISH JOCKEY RETURNS FROM INJURY IN READINESS FOR GRAND NATIONAL MEETING

Williamson wins Aintree fitness battle

By JULIAN MUSCAT

SHOULD Tony McCoy, Adrian Maguire and Mark Dwyer entertain a sense of injustice at sitting out the Grand National meeting, which opens at Aintree tomorrow, they will surely concede that no man deserves his place in the weighing room more than Norman Williamson.

Injuries in National Hunt racing are as inevitable as the fences which cause them. Yet few jockeys have experienced the torment of Williamson, who returns from hand and



Sunny Bay has shortened to 8-1 joint favourite for the Grand National despite a doubt over his participation

The BBC will screen live coverage of tomorrow's rescheduled Dubai World Cup, which will now have a start time 40 minutes earlier than originally planned. The \$4 million race, washed out on Saturday, will be shown on BBC2 at 4.35pm.

facial wounds at Worcester today. On the line is his fitness to partner the heavily backed hunt contender, Time For A Run, over Aintree's famous fences on Saturday.

"I rode out two lots this morning for Mick Channon and the hand felt pretty good," Williamson said yesterday. "I'm a fraction stiff, otherwise I'm ready to give it a go. I've been doing a lot of running so I'm as fit as I can be without having ridden in a race for two weeks."

Victory aboard the Edward O'Grady-trained chaser would close out a chapter of setbacks to Williamson's career. Hailed as the heir apparent after completing the Champion Hurdle-Gold Cup double two seasons back, the broken leg he sustained 19 months ago initiated a se-

quence of injuries that allowed him just one ride in 11 months - during which time a rift with Kim Bailey cost him his job.

Indeed, he was very much in the wilderness until some high-profile winners around Christmas brought him back into fashion. He rode Commanche Court to victory

in the Triumph Hurdle at Cheltenham, then followed a nasty fall at Leopardstown 18 days ago, when his wrist - along with his Aintree ambitions - appeared fractured beyond repair.

"It has been a real struggle," Williamson admitted, "but my season was getting better all the time until that fall in

Ireland. I'd coped with a broken leg and an operation after twice dislocating my shoulder. I don't know what I'd have done if I'd broken my wrist. It certainly felt like I'd broken it, although thankfully it turned out to be a bone in my hand."

If Williamson is winning the injury war, his fellow country-

man Paul Carberry, another whose medical book has become familiar to racecourse doctors, may be not so fortunate.

Carberry was expected to join Williamson in the saddle at Worcester today. Instead he is to receive further attention to a damaged knee. His Grand National place aboard

Backdoor Bounce is now in the balance.

"My knee is still a little weak and I don't think it would be wise to risk it just yet," Carberry said. "I'm hoping to get some more physiotherapy at Aintree. I'd like to ride out over the course on Friday morning and see how the knee reacts."

There was better news for the Lo Stregone team after Graham Bradley declared himself unhurt by his fall in the Irish Grand National at Fairyhouse on Monday. Sister Stephanie, who refused to race

The victory of Dorcas Pride at Fairyhouse yesterday was tinged with sadness as his regular partner, Shane Broderick, was in intensive care in a Dublin hospital after suffering severe neck injuries and bruising to the spinal cord in a fall on Monday.

In Ireland, may also take her chance at Aintree.

Jamie Evans, in demand by Martin Pipe, has been granted a special dispensation by the Jockey Club. Evans falls short of the minimum 15 British winners required for qualification: against that he is a three-time champion jump jockey in his native Australia.

Hardening ground at Aintree yesterday - the going was changed to good - caused Charlie Brooks to reiterate that Sunny Bay may be forced out of contention. After attracting support, the grey was made 8-1 joint-favourite by Ladbrokes but his trainer said: "We will be fine if the ground stays as it is, but I am worried because it is drying out all the time. We will not decide whether the horse runs until the morning of the race."

RESULTS FROM YESTERDAY'S THREE MEETINGS

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Art of getting away with it

SIMON BARNES



Midweek View

Cambridge! No, surely not, the umpire must have lost his head. Caym-brillidge! Caym-brillidge! He's gone off his chump, he is cheering for the Light Blues, what has happened to impartiality?

Well, that's what it sounded like. It was supposed to be a Dire Warning, but it sounded like partisan cheering. It sounded like that to the innocent bystanders, it must have been the most potent form of encouragement to the Cambridge crew, and it was certainly the most powerful depressant for Oxford.

The Boat Race umpire, Tom Cadoux-Hudson, was warning Kevin Whyman, the Cambridge cox, that he was trespassing into Oxford water. That he was encroaching, that he was pushing his luck, that he was balanced on the tight-rope of disqualification.

Now, it is a common place of rowing that a racing eight comprises eight disparate individuals united only in their hatred of the cox. But surely even this, the most hallowed of rowing traditions, can be set aside, for Cambridge have their cox to thank for their victory.

The all-powerful combination of their bullying, luck-pushing cox and the cheering, impotent umpire was what did for Oxford. Rules in sport are there to be explored. It is a fact of sporting life, if not the one most regularly celebrated, that the strongest-willed and most ruthless competitors will always seek to explore the furthest reaches of sporting law. No, not to cheat. Merely to get the greatest possible legal advantage. Not to go for the safe ground, to have-year sporting existence on the very cusp of legality.



Whyman, the Cambridge cox, is exultant after victory in the Boat Race while, in the background, a member of the Oxford crew looks forlorn

This makes logical sense. If a bouncer is legal and the batsman is dodgy, then there is no sense in pitching the ball up. Send him down the regulation two bouncers, and then add a third. Not a head-ball, that would be illegal. Give him one in the upper body, a ball on the cusp of legality. Make the umpire look concerned but helpless, make the batsman feel hard-done-by, make the fielding side feel that you are getting away with something.

The unholy glee of the stolen advantage, surely washed through the Cambridge oarsmen with every umpiring holler. It's not fair, sir! Look

what Whyman minor is doing, sir! And the umpire, taking a strong line, says, Whyman, er, look here, don't ever do that again, all right? I don't want to have to warn you again.

The official's Warning is one of the most ancient traditions of sport. It is supposed to make the offender think again. But all it does is confirm the offender's immaculate judgment to spell out, for the joy of his team, for the discomfiture of the opposition, that he is existing comfortably on legality's cusp.

When rugby union forwards exchange blows, the referee's inclination is not

reprimand but diplomacy. The wagging finger, the lecture, and the very next time this happens you will be sent off, my lad. And the chief offender listens with apparent contrition, but he is glowing inside, and his team glows with him. Joy! We have got away with something, and the bloke that got thumped won't try that again, will he?

Cricket is full of warnings, but scarcely ever is action taken. Bowlers run down the pitch and bring joy to the hearts of spinners and their captain, and give to all the team the pleasure of getting away with something. And

even if this work of destruction brings little practical advantage, it still upsets the opposition. Someone has pulled a stroke on them, and that hurts.

In football, it is the custom for many players to start the game with a thundering tackle on the man they must mark, one designed to "let him know you are there". And referees tend to play along with that, offering instead of a first-minute booking as a Warning. Thus the defender is able to establish psychological ascendancy by (a) his physical assault and (b) the subtle pleasure of getting away with something.

For the pain of having a stroke pulled on you goes very deep. In a way you can accept being beaten fair and square. But to be niggled, bullied and manoeuvred out of it is a terrible blow, far more damaging for self-esteem. There is no one so utterly helpless as the person to whom it is revealed, for the thousandth time, that not only is life unfair, so also is sport.

'The unholy glee of the stolen advantage surely washed through Cambridge'

Nothing causes so much dismay as the belief that your opponent is getting away with something: witness English cricket's hysterical reaction to the Pakistan ball-tampering allegations, or Australia's crazed campaign against a Sri Lanka bowler, Muralitharan, who, they believed, was a chucker. This sense of helpless grievance helps to pave the way for Australia's defeat by Sri Lanka in the World Cup final (Muralitharan 10-0-31-1).

These days, the officials take all the responsibility for the laws, the players virtually none. You may not care for this, but that is the way things are in modern professional sport. As a morality, it has at least the virtue of consistency.

But by adhering to the ancient code of Warning, officials hark back to the days when sport was played for fun. These days, the Warning is a potent source of encouragement. It tells him that he is exactly where he wishes to be, serenely on the cusp of legality.

GOLF

Ryder Cup captain plagued by problems

FROM JOHN HOPKINS
GOLF CORRESPONDENT
IN NEW ORLEANS

WHEREVER he is, Severiano Ballesteros appears to be carrying the cares of the world on his shoulders. Whether it is the Canary Islands, as it was two weeks ago, or New Orleans, where he is competing in the Freeport McDermott Classic this week, Europe's captain in the Ryder Cup looks as cheerful as an undertaker.

Ballesteros is doubtful about his troublesome back and his golf. "The trouble with my golf," he said with about as much levity as he can manage on a sensitive subject, "is that the ball doesn't go as quick as before into the hole. I don't feel comfortable with my swing." He is 30 over par for his ten competitive rounds in five tournaments this season.

Ballesteros has made one trip to Germany to consult the German doctor who helped José María Olazábal to recover from his foot problems and received several injections to reduce the pain in his lower back. So far, there has been no improvement and he plans more visits to Germany.

On the subject of the Ryder Cup and the announcement last week that the selection process for match this year will not be changed, Ballesteros was philosophical. "The case is now closed. I have to cope with it. There have been enough battles already with everybody. The Ryder Cup is not a war, it is a competition between two continents and that is the end of it."

If there was a topic of conversation that brought a hint of a smile, it was the form of Olazábal, who is also competing in New Orleans. Since returning from injury, Olazábal has played three tournaments, is 12 under par and finished twelfth, fourth and first. "Lately a lot of guys have been leaving the European tour, so to have José María back and doing well is good for everyone."

TELEVISION CHOICE

And for his next trick...

The Vanishing Man
ITV, 8.00pm

Anthony Horowitz is obviously a fan of H.G. Wells. *Crime Traveller*, currently on BBC1, draws on elements of *The Time Machine* while this latest Horowitz script makes more than a nod towards *The Invisible Man*. It is an undemanding piece of hokum which features Neil Morrissey as an air freight pilot who is sent to prison for smuggling. That he is innocent of the crime is bad enough. Worse follows when he is whisked off to become the guinea pig in a futuristic scientific experiment. The upshot is that he becomes invisible, a chance for clever work by the special effects team. The trouble is that he can revert to normality without warning, usually when he is stark naked. Fans of *Men Behaving Badly* who have wanted to see more of Morrissey now have their chance, many times over.

The Great Garden Game
Channel 5, 8.00pm

A new television channel is the cue for a new type of gardening series. Out go middle-aged presenters pottering around in greenhouses. In come the bright, keen and far from middle-aged Clare Bradley and Paul Hawkins to host a mixture of garden visits and game show. Each week two teams of amateurs compete in a task set by the head gardener. In tonight's programme, from Bowood House in Wiltshire, the challenge is to replace a length of grass path with a gravel path. The time allotted is three hours, though thankfully we get only the edited highlights. Meanwhile Bradley strolls round the estate in the company of its aristocratic owner. The pitch is clearly towards the younger audience, who may not normally tune in to gardening programmes, and traditionalists may still feel more at home with Alan Titchmarsh.

Modern Times: Dirty Work
BBC2, 9.00pm

It is the least glamorous of jobs but the most enjoyable of films. *Lucy Sandy-Winsch* has had the clever idea of collecting people who are all in their different ways, cleaners. As they are also a shade or two larger than life the result is highly watchable. To garnish the images, Stephen Knight



Tom King as a conscript (BBC1, 9.30pm)

has composed a delightful commentary in Bejmanesque blank verse. We open in Newcastle upon Tyne where Howard patrols the streets at night in his clearing truck, observing the new recruits. He is, by contrast, a clean big house. She used to be a teacher but finds this less pressuring. The most ghastly job on view is cleaning out empty council houses before the new tenants arrive. What John, John and Peter have found in these dwellings is probably best left to the programme. But the easily upset are hereby warned.

Army of Innocents
BBC1, 9.30pm

National Service was introduced in 1947 when the Cold War was at its height and Britain still had an Empire to defend. When it ended, 13 years later, two million young men had been drafted into the armed forces. To mark the 50th anniversary, former conscripts including Michael Aspel, Tom King, MP, and the late Willie Rushin, remember their days in uniform. Many of their experiences are richly funny, at least in retrospect. Those bellowing drill sergeants really existed and soldiers did whitewash coal. After basic training, many conscripts were given mindless jobs. But others saw action abroad and the film takes on a more sombre tone when it recalls campaigns in Korea, Kenya and Malaya in which hundreds of National Servicemen died. Peter Waymark

RADIO CHOICE

Viewing Essential
Radio 4 (FM), 10.00am

The selling and buying of a house is, by general consent, one of an unholy trinity of horrors that can be visited on us. The others are divorce and incurable illness. Heavens knows: we have heard every conceivable variation on the themes of matrimony and mortality. *Viewing Essential*, narrated by Moraid Devlin, is a crash-course in the first comprehensive investigation into the triple whammy of divorce, house vendors, house buyers — or, more often than not, non-buyers — and of course, estate agents. There is only one satisfied customer in today's episode, Danny has recently moved in to a one-bedroom flat, and all is well with his world. My heart went out to let-down Laura as she sobbed her heart out.

RADIO 1

7.00am Mark Radcliffe, includes 7.30am Newsbeat 8.00am Dave Navro 8.30am Today 7.15am Chris Smith 7.30am Discovery 8.10am Words of Faith 8.15am Global Shakedown 8.30am World News 8.15am Andy Kershaw 8.45am Sports Roundup 10.30am One Planet 11.30am Sports International 12.05pm World Business Report 12.15pm Britain Today 12.30pm News 1.00pm The World 1.30pm The World 1.55pm Sports Roundup 3.15pm Global Shakedown 4.15pm World Today 4.30pm BBC English 4.45pm Britain Today 5.30pm World Business Report 5.45pm Sports Roundup 6.30pm Discovery 7.00pm Outlook 7.25pm News 7.30pm The World 7.55pm Britain Today 8.30pm The World 8.55pm Sports Roundup 10.30pm World Today 11.30pm Country Style 11.30pm Multitrack 12.30pm From Our Own Correspondent 12.45pm Britain Today 1.30pm Outlook 1.55pm Words of Faith 2.30pm Assignment 3.15pm Sports Roundup 3.30pm Meridian Books 4.30pm Europe Today

RADIO 2

6.00am Nick Barnard 7.30am Wake Up to Wogan 8.30am Ken Bruce 11.30am Jimmy Young 1.30pm Debbie Thorne 2.00pm Ed Stewart 3.00pm John Dunn 7.00pm Jim Lloyd with Folk on Two 8.00pm The World 8.30pm The World 8.55pm Sports Roundup 10.30pm The World 11.30pm The World 1.30pm The World 1.55pm Sports Roundup 3.15pm The World 4.15pm The World 4.30pm The World 4.45pm Britain Today 5.30pm World Business Report 5.45pm Sports Roundup 6.30pm Discovery 7.00pm Outlook 7.25pm News 7.30pm The World 7.55pm Britain Today 8.30pm The World 8.55pm Sports Roundup 10.30pm World Today 11.30pm Country Style 11.30pm Multitrack 12.30pm From Our Own Correspondent 12.45pm Britain Today 1.30pm Outlook 1.55pm Words of Faith 2.30pm Assignment 3.15pm Sports Roundup 3.30pm Meridian Books 4.30pm Europe Today

RADIO 5 LIVE

5.00am Morning Reports 6.00am The Breakfast Programme 9.00am The Mags 12.00pm Midday with Mark 2.00pm Rascals on Five 4.00pm John Inverdale Nationwide 7.00pm News Extra with Valerie Singleton 7.30pm Trevor Brooking's Football Night, Scotland v Austria. Plus news of the rest of the rest of tonight's football action, including the results of the National Lottery draw 10.00pm Brian Hayes's Election Night 12.00am After Hours with Rhod Sharp 2.00am Up All Night with Richard Dainy

TALK RADIO

5.00am Chris Aschey and Sandy War 7.00am Paul Ross 9.00am Scott Chisholm 12.00pm Lorraine Kelly 2.00pm Tommy Boyd 4.00pm Peter Dinkley 7.00pm Muz Dee's Sportszone 10.00pm James White 1.00pm Ian Collins

RADIO 3

6.00am On Air, with Andrew McGregor. Includes Handel (Water Music Suite); Mussorgsky, orch Ravel (Pictures at an Exhibition); C.P.E. Bach (Sonata in A, Wo 70 No 1); G. F. Handel (Overture in D); Bartok (Piano Concerto No 3).
8.00am Morning Collection, with Penny Gore. Includes Haydn (Piano Trio in E flat, H. XV 22); Loewe (Kaiserhaus; Händel der Vogler); Schubert (Impromptu, D 935).
10.00am Musical Encounters, with Stephanie Hughes. Includes Schumann (Drei Fantasiestücke, Op 73); Martinu (Concerto for double string orchestra, piano and timpani); Tchaikovsky (The Nutcracker, Part 2); Tchaikovsky (Cello Concerto No 2 in E minor); Victor Herbert (Cello Concerto No 2 in E minor).
12.00pm Composer of the Week: Amy Beach, with Chris Wines and the biographer Adrienne Field Black.
1.00pm Concert Hall, Live from the Wigmore Hall, London. John Harle, saxophone and John Lenehan, piano. Peter de Rosa (Deep Purple); Richard Rodney Bennett (Samba; Sonchheim Waltzes); Denisov (Sonata); Trad (Three Hungarian Folk Songs from Cello); Paul Mottram (Moccasin Trail).
2.00pm Midweek Classics, with Susan Sharpe. Includes Britten (Variations on a Theme of Frank Bridge); Sallé (Gnossekens, Set 1); Berlioz (La Mort de Cleopatra).
4.00pm Choral Encounters, Live from All Saints Church, Margaret Street, London. Includes Introit, Ferguson (Away with gloom, Away with doubt); Pärt 113, 114 (Psalms); Corbelli (Howells in G); Gounod Voluntary (Sarabande for the Morning of Easter). Director of music Harry Bramme, organist Nicholas Luff.

RADIO 4

5.55am Shipping Forecast (LW) 6.00am News Briefing 6.10am Farming Today 6.25am Prayer for the Day 6.30am Today, includes Thought for the Day 6.40am Racing (Pige and Giant Marrows, by Harry Pearson (9/5) 6.50am Weather
8.00am News 8.05am Midweek. Topical discussion with Times columnist Libby Purves and her guests of the week.
10.00am News: Viewing Essential (FM). See Choice
10.00am Daily Service (LW)
10.15am On This Day (LW). See Choice
10.30am Women's Hour, Wendy Austin meets the Latin American jazz pianist Tania Maria
11.30am Gardeners' Question Time, with chairman Eric Robinson and panelists Geoffrey Smith, Bob Flowerdew and Nigel Colborn answering questions in Bridgend (9)
12.00pm News; Yes and Yours. Consumer news and current affairs with Lesley Rodoch
12.25pm Envious Cases. Based on the comedy thriller by Georgina Heyer. Starring James Fleet and Helen Boswell (4/4) 12.55pm Weather
1.00pm The World at One, with Nick Garra
1.40pm The Archers (1.15pm Shipping Forecast)
2.00pm News: The Hollow Man, by John Dickson Carr. Dramatised by Peter Ling. With Donald Sinden and Nigel Davenport (2/5)
2.45pm Treasure Islands. The first of a new series of the programme focusing on children's literature. Michael Rosen reads the latest in horror fiction with the author Pete Johnson and Kimberley Reynolds, director of the National Centre for Research in Children's Literature
3.00pm News: The Afternoon Shift. Russell Davies talks to two teenagers who had to come to terms with their father revealing his homosexuality.
4.00pm News 4.05pm Kaleidoscope, Robin McAlvey sees Colin Firth in *Fever Pitch*, the film version of Nick Hornby's best-selling book about his life-long obsession with Arsenal
4.45pm Short Story: Gendarme's List, by Peter Crowther. Read by Tudor Barnes
5.00pm PM 5.50pm Shipping Forecast 5.55pm Weather
6.00pm Six O'Clock News
6.30pm Countryside. Ned Sherrin hosts the first of the general knowledge music quiz. With Evelyn Glennie awarding the prizes (5)
7.00pm News 7.05pm The Archers
7.30pm The Coroner. Another look behind the scenes of the West Yorkshire Coroner's office (6/6)
8.05pm The Witches. A look at the wedding dress through answering, archive and music (9/6) (9)
8.15pm The People's Peace. Three generations of a medical family give their opinions on life before and after the National Health Service was created in 1948 (6/6) (9)
9.00pm Coasting the Earth. A look at the new packaging regulations to be introduced this month and their implications for manufacturers, consumers and the environment (2/5)
9.30pm Kaleidoscope (9) 9.55pm Weather
10.00pm The World Tonight, with Isabel Hilton
10.45pm Book at Bedtime: Reading in the Dark, by Seamus Deane. Read by Stephen Rea (8/8)
11.00pm The Slivers. The comedy sketch show with Tim De Jong (2/5) (9)
11.30pm Doon Your Way. The comedy series featuring Doon Mackichan, Pam Ferris, Lesley Sharp, Phil Cornwell, Anne Pashall and Alistair McGowan (1)
12.00pm News 12.30am The Late Book: The Wasp Factory, by Ian Banks (8/10)
12.45am Shipping Forecast 1.00am As World Service

FREQUENCY GUIDE, RADIO 1, FM 87.6-88.8. RADIO 2, FM 88.0-90.2. RADIO 3, FM 90.2-92.4. RADIO 4, FM 92.4-94.6. LW 198. MW 720. RADIO 5 LIVE, MW 648, 908. WORLD SERVICE, MW 648, LW 198 (12.45-5.55am). CLASSIC FM, FM 100-102. VIRGIN RADIO, FM 105.8. MW 1157, 1215. TALK RADIO, MW 1053, 1059. Television and radio listings compiled by Peter Dear, Ian Hughes, Rosemary Smith, Susan Thomson, Jane Gregory and John Matthews.

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Playing the fool, but it's no laughing matter

The best April Fool jokes are those that take in millions of us. Yesterday, Esther Rantzen, never a woman to duck a challenge, harnessed the full might of afternoon television and managed to hoodwink... just one. Fair do's, Esther (BBC2) didn't make a bad job of it. The young man in question was, to borrow from his own fascinating vernacular, eventually "done up like a kipper, my dear". But quality should not detract from the lack of quantity. It was, still, just the one. Which is more than can be said of Rantzen letting us "at home" in the joke. How many of these conspiratorial pieces to camera has she done over the years? Hundreds, thousands, millions — who knows? Once again, I watched with a mixture of faint nausea and fainter fascination as she learnt forward and confided that today's subject was practical jokes: "Everyone in the studio

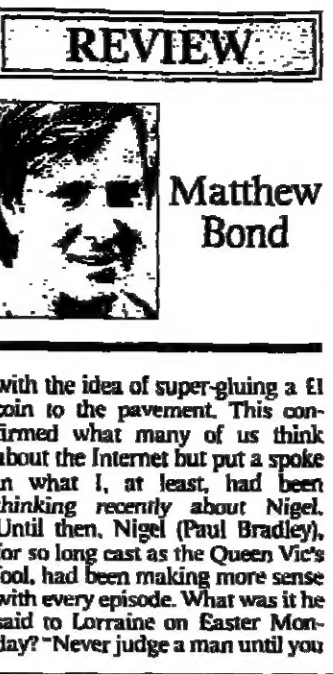
knows that... except one young man who thinks it's about infidelity." But it was the victim himself who turned a bog-standard April Fool into something special. His unshakable self-confidence and rich use of language were all apparently genuine and very near-hand. Nothing that Rantzen could have bridled theatrically and gave us our first careful of an accent that made Danny Baker sound like Professor Higgins: "I'm a chided Rantzen, you've had your 'share of the birds' in your time — any idea how many? 'One or two'."

Nothing, however, could beat his response to the planned gag, which claimed that she had enjoyed a one-night stand with our man, as a result of which she had become pregnant and had a baby. There, flashed Rantzen, what do you say to her now? Our hero gave it plenty. "How dare you come on this show, my dear, and accuse me of knocking you up?"

In the end they got him, thanks to some inside information about his former best friend. But it had been a valiant effort. The rest of the programme passed as a reminder that people who list practical jokes as a hobby are best avoided, particularly if the fulfilled prankster in question is a funeral director. His firm, he chorled, had an old retainer who was in the habit of taking an afternoon nap in one of the coffins. Until the afternoon when "some of the lads" screwed the lid down. What it is to be game for a laugh. More jokes round at Albert Square and EastEnders (BBC1), where Nigel, having trooped the Internet for inspiration, came up

with the idea of super-gluing a £1 coin to the pavement. This confirmed what many of us think about the Internet but put a spoke in what I, at least, had been thinking recently about Nigel. Until then, Nigel (Paul Bradley), for so long cast as the Queen Vic's fool, had been making more sense with every episode. What was it he said to Lorraine on Easter Monday? "Never judge a man until you have walked a mile in his shoes." Brilliant — even if it did come from a fortune cookie.

There was, I confess, the odd moment when I thought that *Timewatch: The Forgotten Allies* (BBC2) might be an April fool. That was partly because of the veterans, most of whom were interviewed in mahogany-lined libraries and recounted tales of extraordinary bravery in the Burma war in the laid-back, matter-of-fact military style that has been parodied mercilessly over the years. One chap recalled his own personal method of flushing out the Japanese. "I used to chuck a grenade or two in and say 'there you are, share that among you'."



Matthew Bond

REVIEW

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But my doubts (in reality more about the programme's objectivity than its veracity) stemmed far more from the script. No matter how soothing Susannah York's narration was, I would have liked to arrive at that conclusion without feeling quite so manipulated.

- BBC1**
- 6.00am Business Breakfast (73821)
 - 7.00 BBC Breakfast News (73286)
 - 9.00 Breakfast News Extra (73384/395)
 - 9.25 Style Challenge (390250)
 - 9.45 Kilroy (2440208)
 - 10.30 Can't Cook, Won't Cook (20579)
 - 11.00 News (7483043)
 - 11.05 The Really Useful Show (9426734)
 - 11.35 Change That (8857205)
 - 12.00 News (7483043) and weather (4650111)
 - 12.05pm Call My Bluff (5202840)
 - 12.35 Good Living (9303111)
 - 12.50 News (7483043) and weather (4650111)
 - 1.35 Regional News (5088314)
 - 1.45 The Weather Show (3916102)
 - 1.50 Neighbours (7483043)
 - 2.10 Quincey (7304915)
 - 3.00 As Time Goes By Penny goes into hospital for a routine operation (73289)
 - 3.30 Playdays (8415289) 3.55 Monster Cals (9051821) 4.05 The New York Bear Show (9051821) 4.10 Popeye and Son (8438111) 4.30 Out of Line New drama about a small village choir (7701111) 5.00 Newsround (7483043) 5.10 Blue Peter (7483043)
 - 5.25 Neighbours (7483043)
 - 6.00 News (7483043) and weather (53)
 - 6.30 Newsround South East (7483043)
 - 7.00 How Do They Do That? New series presented by Esther Rantzen and Eamonn Holmes. A man who taught a flock of geese to fly, how scientists unlocked the secrets of life on Mars, and the special effects that create a winter wonderland in less than two hours (8598)
 - 7.30 Tomorrow's World Philippa Forrester tries out an innovative self-cooling suit designed to allow firefighters to work safely in extreme temperatures. Plus: Howard Stabford reports on technology which could help paralysed people by picking up their brainwaves (7483043)
 - 8.00 The National Lottery Live Carol Smilie introduces the millionaire-making draw (7483043)
 - 8.15 25 Years of the Two Ronnies Classic comedy clips from Messrs Barker and Corbett. Last in series (7483043)
 - 8.55 Points of View Anne Robinson presents a selection of viewers' comments on BBC programmes (7483043)
 - 9.00 News (7483043) and weather (2847)
 - 10.00 Army of Innocents Documentary about marking the 50th anniversary of National Service in Britain (8604)
 - 11.00 Sportscast Desmond Lynam introduces highlights of tonight's World Cup qualifiers, including Scotland v Austria at Celtic Park, Ukraine v Northern Ireland, and Macedonia v the Republic of Ireland. Plus, Julian Wilson looks forward to Saturday's Martial Grand National at Aintree (364178)
 - 12.15am A Town Like Alice (1958) with Virginia McKenna and Peter Finch. An English woman and an Australian POW struggle to survive a Japanese death march. Directed by Jack Lee (823111)
 - 2.10 Weather (3565154)
- Video Plus+ and the Video PlusCode**
- The numbers next to each TV programme listing are Video PlusCode numbers, which allow you to programme your video recorder with a Video Plus+ handset. Tip in the Video PlusCode for the programme you wish to record. Video Plus+ ("V") and Video PlusCode are trademarks of Recorder Development Ltd.

- BBC2**
- 6.00 Open University: Miles of Alaska (280821) 6.25 The Birth of Calculus (280821) 6.50 Flight Simulators and Robots (3772753) 7.15 See Hear Breakfast News (848734) 7.30 Secret Life of Toys (297888) 7.45 The Reckoners (453444) 8.10 Wacky Races (348818) 8.35 The Lowdown (357020) 9.05 Act-U-B (1024109) 9.35 Sweet Valley High (7498289) 9.55 Funnybones (745212) 10.10 The Teletubbies (1760208) 10.35 Baber (7483043) 11.00 The Young Indiana Jones Chronicles (41289) 12.30 Working Lunch (62043) 1.00 Secret Life of Toys (1359255)
 - 1.15 Passage to Marvellous (1844, b/w) with Humphrey Bogart, Peter Lorne and Claude Rains. A journalist investigating a French Air Force squadron based in Britain discovers that their leader has escaped from Devil's Island. Directed by Michael Curtiz (2634764)
 - 3.00 News (7483043) and weather (7954208) 3.05 The Natural World Marine predators (9184043) 3.55 News (7483043) and weather (7954208) 4.00 Blockbusters (862888) 4.25 Ready, Steady, Cook (862888) 4.55 Esther (7483043) 5.30 Today's the Day (82)
 - 6.00 Star Trek: The Next Generation (7483043)
 - 6.45 Trex and Simon's Transmission Impossible (77385)
 - 7.00 Seven Wonders of the World Thomas Elmer, Professor of Biology at Cornell University describes his personal wonders of the world (7483043)
 - 7.30 Black British Profile of Paula Fenton, a lupus sufferer (7483043)
 - 8.00 University Challenge Charing Cross and Westminster Medical School v King's College School of Medicine and Dentistry (7483043)
 - 8.30 Changing Rooms Last in the interior design challenge series (7483043)
 - 9.00 Modern Times: Dirty Work The work of professional cleaners (7483043)
 - 9.50 A Woman Called Smith Story of a Bristol mother who, upon discovering her son's heroin addiction, set up a local anti-drugs organisation (7483043)
 - 10.00 Airport (7483043)
 - 10.30 Newswatch with Jeremy Paxman (7483043)
 - 11.30 The Kingdom: Thy Kingdom Come in Danish with English subtitles (89173)
 - 12.30 Learning Zone: Open University (82845) 1.00 The Art of Breathing (89508) 1.30 The Whose Choice is It (89508) 2.00 Language Season (30570) 4.00 BBC Focus: English Heritage (55425) 4.30 Unleash in the Classroom (77574) 5.00 Basic Skills: What's the Problem? (53405) 5.30 Voluntary Matters (13203)

- HTV**
- 6.00am GMTV (681956)
 - 9.25 Chain Letters (73820579)
 - 9.55 Regional News (7483043)
 - 10.00 The Time, the Place (50385)
 - 10.30 This Morning (7483043)
 - 12.20pm Regional News (7483043)
 - 12.30 News (7483043) and weather (9036208)
 - 12.55 Shortland Street (7483043)
 - 1.25 Home and Away (7483043)
 - 1.50 Afternoon Live (8063032)
 - 2.20 Vanessa (7483043)
 - 2.50 Afternoon Live (8219698)
 - 3.20 News (7483043)
 - 3.25 Regional News (7483043)
 - 3.30 Tots TV: Sesame (7483043) 3.40 The Bobs (905734) 3.50 Soapy and Co (7483043) 4.10 Ammanford (7483043) 4.20 Pinky and the Brain (7483043) 4.40 Cone Zone (7483043)
 - 5.10 Look and Cook (1883579)
 - 5.40 News (7483043) and weather (595821)
 - 6.00 Home and Away (7483043)
 - 6.25 HTV Weather (255227)
 - 6.30 HTV News (7483043)
 - 7.00 Emmerdale Kim's wife springs some surprise. Linda hears a fearful confession (7483043)
 - 7.30 Coronation Street Mike Baldwin decides it is time to fight back and Natalie causes Kevin some discomfort (7483043)
 - 8.00 The Vanishing Man An uneasy comedy about an experiment — which works — to make people invisible. With Neil Morrissey and Barbara Flynn. Followed by National Lottery Result (1385)
 - 10.00 News (7483043) and weather (30656)
 - 10.30 Regional News (7483043)
 - 10.40 Gremilins II: The New Batch (1990) starring Zach Galligan, Phoebe Cates and John Glover. Satirical sequel to the 1984 hit. Look for a string of carrots and movie tie-ins. Directed by Joe Dante (7483043)
 - 12.35am Dating the Enemy Patricia Mitchell presents the series in which a segregated studio audience of men and women get the chance to say what they really think about the opposite sex (5287241)
 - 1.10 Real Stories of the Highway Patrol (7076512)
 - 1.35 Keys to the Kingdom (1990) with Dick Van Dyke, Daphne Ashbrook and Kate Vernon. A newspaper publisher becomes the target of an old rival who will stop at nothing to bring him down (980808)
 - 3.15 Not Fade Away (744777)
 - 4.15 Sound Bites (5882512)
 - 4.30 The Time, the Place (744488)
 - 5.00 Coronation Street (7483043)
 - 5.30 News (40357)

- CENTRAL**
- As HTV West except:
 - 12.55pm-1.25 A Country Practice (9044227)
 - 1.50-2.00 Shortland Street (1883579)
 - 6.25-7.00 Central News (26802)
 - 12.35am Dating the Enemy (7258864)
 - 1.35 Funky Bunker (8404408)
 - 2.00 The Chart Show (8418777)
 - 3.35 Comedy Central (2036096)
 - 4.30 Central Jobfinder '97 (9467154)
 - 5.20 Asian Eye (2748319)
- WESTCOUNTRY**
- As HTV West except:
 - 12.55pm-1.25 A Country Practice (9044227)
 - 1.50-2.00 Shortland Street (1883579)
 - 6.25-7.00 Westcountry Live (34260)
- MERIDIAN**
- As HTV West except:
 - 12.55-1.25 A Country Practice (9044227)
 - 1.50-2.00 Home and Away (1883579)
 - 6.00 Meridian Tonight (21)
 - 6.30-7.00 Doing It Up (73)
 - 5.00am Freezone (40532)
- ANGLIA**
- As HTV West except:
 - 12.55-1.25 A Country Practice (9044227)
 - 1.50-2.00 Shortland Street (1883579)
 - 6.22 Anglia Weather (255958)
 - 6.25-7.00 Anglia News (26802)
- Starts: 6.00am Sesame Street (66531)**
- 7.00 The Big Breakfast (94227)
 - 9.00 Bewitched (17005)
 - 9.30 Sister Sister (866688)
 - 9.55 Hangin' with Mr. Cooper (7487173)
 - 10.20 The Crystal Maze (7784444)
 - 11.20 Earthworm Jim (4961289)
 - 11.45 The Pink Panther (8485192)
 - 12.00 Fresh Pop (4643821)
 - 12.05pm California Dreams (9738173)
 - 12.30 Baby It's You (57111)
 - 1.00 Slot Methrin (2529686)
 - 1.15 Lisabeth (34740591)
 - 1.30 Film: Wee Willie Winkle (76137734)
 - 3.20 Fresh Pop (7943192)
 - 3.30 Collectors' Lot (70)
 - 4.00 Fifteen-to-One (14)
 - 4.30 Wild Britain (96)
 - 5.00 Pimp (6361005)
 - 5.15 Mynd Drot Drot: Y Fferen A'r Cob Cymreig (5423005)
 - 5.30 Countdown (5)
 - 6.00 Newyddion (806647)
 - 6.05 Heno (357024)
 - 6.35 Bob Y Ddau (238288)
 - 7.00 Pobol y Cwm (450005)
 - 7.25 Fflemlo (913531)
 - 8.00 Pwcor (2276)
 - 8.30 Newyddion (9463)
 - 9.30 Spin City (1043)
 - 9.30 Roseanne (44647)
 - 10.00 Brookside (906208)
 - 10.35 ER (143802)
 - 11.30 Caroline in the City (74821)
 - 12.00am Under the Moon (394608)
 - 2.30 NBA XXL (98703)
 - 4.30-5.30 Trans World Sport (48070)

- CHANNEL 4**
- 6.00am Sesame Street (66531) 7.00 The Big Breakfast (94227) 9.00 Bewitched (17005) 9.30 Sister Sister (866688) 9.55 Hangin' with Mr. Cooper (7487173) 10.20 The Crystal Maze (7784444) 11.20 Earthworm Jim (4961289) 11.45 The Pink Panther (8485192) 12.00 Fresh Pop (4643821) 12.05pm California Dreams (9738173) 12.30 Baby It's You (57111) 1.00 Slot Methrin (2529686) 1.15 Lisabeth (34740591) 1.30 Film: Wee Willie Winkle (76137734) 3.20 Fresh Pop (7943192) 3.30 Collectors' Lot (70) 4.00 Fifteen-to-One (14) 4.30 Wild Britain (96) 5.00 Pimp (6361005) 5.15 Mynd Drot Drot: Y Fferen A'r Cob Cymreig (5423005) 5.30 Countdown (5) 6.00 Newyddion (806647) 6.05 Heno (357024) 6.35 Bob Y Ddau (238288) 7.00 Pobol y Cwm (450005) 7.25 Fflemlo (913531) 8.00 Pwcor (2276) 8.30 Newyddion (9463) 9.30 Spin City (1043) 9.30 Roseanne (44647) 10.00 Brookside (906208) 10.35 ER (143802) 11.30 Caroline in the City (74821) 12.00am Under the Moon (394608) 2.30 NBA XXL (98703) 4.30-5.30 Trans World Sport (48070)
- Walker Barry Anderson (9.00pm)**
- 9.00 Countrywide Undercover: Dangerous Walks What happens when rural footpaths and bridleways are strewn with barbed wire and "keep out" signs (7483043)
 - 9.30 Fortean TV Father Lionel Fanthorpe introduces highlights from the series about the inexplicable (7483043)
 - 10.00 ER: Fortune's Fools Nurse Hathaway puts her job in on the line when she talks to the press about a patient's death. Benton is told he's going to be a father and Dr Green asks for advice on how to finish a relationship (7483043)
 - 11.00 Friends: The One after the Super Bowl Part 2. When the gang visit Marcel on the movie set, Rachel offers to help Monica meet the stars. Featuring guest appearances by Jean-Claude Van Damme and Julia Roberts (7483043)
 - 11.30 Roseanne Christmas celebrations are put on hold when Jackie overhears a mysterious telephone call (7483043)
 - 12.00 Under the Moon Sports magazine (394603)
 - 2.30 NBA XXL American basketball action (98703)
 - 4.30 Transworld Sport (48070)
 - 5.30-6.00 Backdate (7483043)

- CHANNEL 5**
- 6.00am 5 News Early News, sport and entertainment (7113378)
 - 7.30 Harakaze Magazine for pre-school children (233734)
 - 8.00 Adventures of the Bush Patrol Ben makes a lightning discovery (2851483)
 - 8.30 Worldwide: History in the Making Russell Grant investigates local history (2850734)
 - 9.00 Espresso Daily magazine show featuring advice, discussion and consumer advice (550368)
 - 10.00 Exclusive Entertainment news (7483043)
 - 10.30 Fame and Fortune (7483043)
 - 11.00 Looze: Can An Affair Save Your Marriage? (900482)
 - 11.50 Espresso Update (4584227)
 - 12.00 The Bold and the Beautiful Storm tries to stop Ridge from marrying his sister (7483043)
 - 12.30pm Family Affairs (7483043)
 - 1.00 5 News Update (92788802)
 - 1.05 Sunbeam Beech M is caught spying on Casey (7483043)
 - 2.00 5's Company Live entertainment show (9278901)
 - 3.30 Born To Scream (1992) Based on the true story of two journalists and their battle to keep their premature daughter alive. Starring Michael Moriarty and Pamela Reed (4748005)
 - 5.20 5's Company Update (4828111)
 - 5.30 100 Per Cent Gameshow (717859)
 - 6.00 Whistle (7483043)
 - 6.30 Family Affairs Angus tries to make the peace between Chris and his wife Sally (7483043)
 - 7.00 Exclusive (1615818)
 - 7.30 Serengeti Safari: The Fastest Thing on Four Legs (7483043)
- Hawkins and Bradley (8.00pm)**
- 8.00 The Great Garden Game with Paul Hawkins and Clare Bradley. In the first of a gardening game show the contestants are challenged to replace a grass patch with a gravel one, in 3 hours (1624666)
 - 8.30 5 News (1803173)
 - 9.00 Rich in Love (1993) Family drama about the coming of age of a Southern Belle. With Albert Finney, Jill Clayburgh and Kathryn Erbe (3235885)
 - 10.50 Exclusive Extra (5515802)
 - 11.00 The Jack Docherty Show Late night chat and comedy hosted by Scottish comedian Jack Docherty (3947537)
 - 11.40 TBS and FBS medical odd presented by Tony Slattery (2805840)
 - 12.10am Live and Dangerous Late night sports show hosted by Dominik Diamond and Trish Aducci (9425311)
 - 4.40 Prisoner: Cell Block H (9280241)
 - 5.30 100 Per Cent (7483043)

- For more comprehensive listings of satellite and cable channels, see the Directory, published on Saturday**
- SKY 1**
- 6.00am Morning Glory (111937) 9.00 Regis and Katelyn Live (111937) 10.00 America's Funniest Home Videos (111937) 11.00 Days of Our Lives (111937) 12.00 The Donny Monty Show (94242) 1.00am The Donny Monty Show (94242) 2.00am The Donny Monty Show (94242) 3.00am The Donny Monty Show (94242) 4.00am The Donny Monty Show (94242) 5.00am The Donny Monty Show (94242) 6.00am The Donny Monty Show (94242) 7.00am The Donny Monty Show (94242) 8.00am The Donny Monty Show (94242) 9.00am The Donny Monty Show (94242) 10.00am The Donny Monty Show (94242) 11.00am The Donny Monty Show (94242) 12.00am The Donny Monty Show (94242) 1.00am The Donny Monty Show (94242) 2.00am The Donny Monty Show (94242) 3.00am The Donny Monty Show (94242) 4.00am The Donny Monty Show (94242) 5.00am The Donny Monty Show (94242) 6.00am The Donny Monty Show (94242) 7.00am The Donny Monty Show (94242) 8.00am The Donny Monty Show (94242) 9.00am The Donny Monty Show (94242) 10.00am The Donny Monty Show (94242) 11.00am The Donny 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SQUASH 43

Walker plays by the book at British Open

SPORT

SIMON BARNES 46

Why sport's artful dodgers push their luck to the limit

WEDNESDAY APRIL 2 1997

Injuries force selectors to pick and hope

By DAVID HANDS
RUGBY CORRESPONDENT

THE first British Isles and Ireland rugby union party to visit South Africa for 17 years will be named today and it is a melancholy fact that, such is the paucity of talent in certain positions, several players who have neither form nor fitness on their side are likely to be chosen. One of those positions, wing three-quarter, was further complicated yesterday by reports that Iwan Evans had withdrawn from contention. But Evans, the former Wales captain and one of three players considered to have the necessary qualities to lead the Lions, denied suggestions that he would not tour if Martin Johnson was preferred as captain.

The Llanelli wing, 33 and a veteran of the 1989 and 1993 Lions tours, decided earlier in the year that he would bid for a place to South Africa and he assured the four home unions committee last night that his availability was

unchanged. That will have been a particular relief before the committee confirmed the choice of the selectors, since so few quality finishers are available.

Indeed, Evans would be my choice as captain, given the respect in which he is held, his ability to hold down an international place and the positive image he presents to the world at large. However, the likelihood is that Johnson, a contender to captain England this season, will follow in the steps of other locks who have led the Lions in South Africa — Robin Thompson (1955), Willie-John McBride (1974) and Bill Beaumont (1980).

The first Lions party of the professional era, 35 strong, will have been examined more exhaustively than its predecessors. Notational analysis has been done on all contenders so that selection is based not only on the evidence of watching eyes but also the camera's unflinching glare, which can reveal elements of play that might otherwise remain concealed.

However, unforgiving glares are not confined to the camera. The team management of Fran Cotton, Ian McGeechan and Jim Telfer are rich in experience and between them can claim seven Lions tours as players and four as coaches. It is hard to believe that any trio could offer greater knowledge of the peculiar demands such a tour creates, or be more aware of playing trends in the global game.

For all that, the party will include more than its fair share of hit-and-hopers, a situation imposed largely by injury. What to do, for example, with Keith Wood, Neil Jenkins, Simon Geoghegan, Colin Charvis, Gwyn Jones, Christian Loader and Bryan Redpath? All are, or have been, injured at significant stages this season, yet the chances are that Wood, the Ireland hooker and erstwhile captain, Geoghegan, the Ireland wing, and Jenkins, the leading British points-scorer from Pontypridd, will all be chosen.

Peter Clohesy, now playing his rugby for Queensland, is likely to

DAVID HANDS'S SELECTION	
BACKS	
FULL BACK: T. Stanger (England), N. Beal (England)	
WING: A. Hogg (England), T. Evans (Wales), T. Underwood (England)	
CENTRE: A. Hastings (Wales), S. Gibbs (Wales), W. Greenwood (England), J. Gascoll (England), G. Townsend (Scotland)	
STAND-OFF HALVES: M. Catt (England), P. Grayson (England), N. Jenkins (Wales)	
SCRUM HALVES: K. Bracken (England), A. Healey (England), R. Howley (Wales)	
FORWARDS	
PROPS: J. Leonard (England), G. Rowntree (England), T. Smith (Scotland), P. Wallace (Ireland), D. Young (Wales)	
HOOKERS: P. Greening (England), M. Hogan (England), R. Neade (Ireland)	
LOCKS: J. Davidson (Ireland), M. Johnson (England), S. Shaw (England), G. Weir (Scotland)	
BACK ROW: N. Beal (England), L. Delagato (England), R. Hill (England), E. Miller (Ireland), S. Quinnell (Wales), T. Rodbar (England), R. Walmer (Scotland)	

be called upon at tight-head prop and a late runner has emerged in Barrie Williams, the Neath hooker. All these players, however, offer hostages to fortune, either because they are prone to injury, or for

disciplinary reasons, or simply because their experience is so limited that there can be no certainty about their ability to perform in South Africa. The dynamic Wood, for example,

has not played since dislocating a shoulder against France in January. He has a history of shoulder problems exacerbated by his kamikaze approach in the loose, should he start the tour, it is pertinent to wonder whether he will finish it.

Phil Greening, the England reserve, offers similar qualities, but measured more sensibly; Williams is a good ball player whose time for Wales will surely come, while Ross Neade, Wood's replacement, offers a solid dose of New Zealand reality and organisation.

At the start of this season, Redpath, the Melrose scrum half, would have been my favourite as second-choice scrum half behind Robert Howley. But he has struggled with injury during his past two internationals, a back condition kept him out of the Scotland tour to New Zealand last summer and Kyran Bracken is playing so well for Saracens that he must rate consideration, along with Austin Healey, who has the advantage of being able to play on the wing.

Indeed, flexibility is the keynote to the party that I would choose to leave on May 17, a virtue partly imposed by necessity since there is no obvious contender for the vital position of stand-off half. Gregor Townsend or Mike Catt could do a job there, but you would not place your mortgage on their ability to run the game; Paul Grayson will surely go for his goal-kicking alone, but it would be no surprise were Jenkins to be reborn as an international stand-off this summer.

That assumes his broken forearm will mend in time. Wales may prefer Jenkins at full back, yet his skills as pivot for Pontypridd are clear to see. If McGeechan could turn Rob Andrew into a world-class performer in Australia in 1989, then he can do as much for Jenkins in South Africa, and so obviate the need to consider Jonathan Davies, 34, for whom the bridge between the two rugby codes may just have come too late.

Leicester ring changes, page 43

Weary Taylor considers break from tour

By SIMON WILDE

MARK TAYLOR is considering standing down from the Australia cricket team, despite leading his country to victory in the Test series in South Africa and the second one-day international in Port Elizabeth on Monday.

Taylor has struggled with the bat throughout the six weeks of the tour and there are fears that he may be suffering from chronic fatigue syndrome. Taylor, who played a series of wild shots as he laboured for 44 balls to score 17 in Port Elizabeth, believes that a self-imposed exile may be the solution to his problems.

"The best thing I can do is have a rest from bat and ball and maybe try the golf club and the little white ball for a while," he said after his side's

seven-wicket win, which levelled the seven-match one-day series at 1-1. The third match is in Cape Town today.

There appears to be no suggestion, however, of Taylor missing any part of Australia's 16-week tour of England, which starts early next month and the team for which is due to be announced this weekend.

He has received private assurances that he will lead the team from the selectors and from Denis Rogers, the chairman of the Australian Cricket Board, who is in South Africa. "He is the best man for the job and has carried himself remarkably well as captain," Rogers said.

There had been speculation that Taylor might temporarily step down at the start of the one-day series, especially as he

was experiencing back pain that has required treatment in the past.

However, Ian Healy, the vice-captain, was suspended for two matches because of ill discipline during the third and final Test match at Centurion, thus forcing Taylor to carry on. Healy returns to the side today, opening the way for Taylor to take his overdue rest.

Taylor, 32, has been playing almost continuously since October and has had little time away from the game since taking over as captain of Australia from Allan Border late in 1994. His poor form in Tests spans 11 matches dating back to December 1995, when he scored his most recent half-century, an innings of 96 against Sri Lanka in Perth.

"I might have the next few games off and give Michael Di Venuto a go," Taylor said. "I thought about having the second game off... it won't be easy as captain of the tour but I've sat out before. I don't believe I've lost it with the bat. To say I'm mentally tired is probably true. It certainly hasn't been through lack of trying."

Taylor is not the first cricketer to suffer from the exhausting effects of the modern international treadmill. Richie Richardson, the former West Indies captain, took a sabbatical after being unable to complete a second season in county cricket with Yorkshire in 1994, and during his four years as a Test captain rarely produced the batting form of which he was once capable.

Michael Atherton, who is expected to lead England against Taylor's side this summer, has mentally stood up extremely well to the immense demands of his job but he, too, has been plagued by back problems and, like Taylor, was keen that he — and his side — should take a rest from



Taylor is grim-faced as he leaves the field after being dismissed in the final Test against South Africa last month. Photograph: Mike Hutchings

Mark Taylor's Test match batting record as captain of Australia	
1994-95 v Pakistan (away)	0, 0, 0, 0, 32
1994-95 v England (home)	50, 58, 9, 19, 40, 113, 30, 13, 9, 92
1994-95 v West Indies (away)	35, 187, 37, 5, 2, 20, 8
1995-96 v Pakistan (home)	80, 40, 123, 47, 50
1995-96 v Sri Lanka (home)	96, 7, 287, 21, 10
1996-97 v India (away)	27, 37
1996-97 v West Indies (home)	43, 36, 27, 18, 7, 10, 11, 2, 1
1996-97 v South Africa (away)	16, 6, 13, 38, 5

"bat and ball" before the winter tour of Zimbabwe and New Zealand. The desire to have a break was understandable but it resulted in England being "caught cold" in the early weeks of the tour and Atherton himself went through his

worst run of form with the bat since becoming captain. He scored 196 runs in 13 innings in Zimbabwe, although David Houghton, the Zimbabwe player-coach, claimed some of the credit for his troubles, saying that he had instructed his bowlers to target Atherton.



Atherton: coping with demands of captaincy

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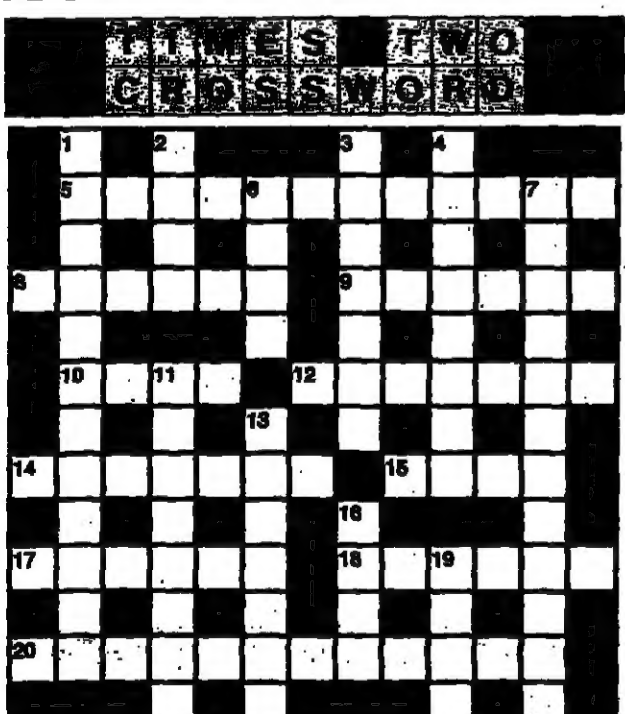
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No 1057

ACROSS

- 5 Science of space flight (12)
- 8 Smooth little stone (6)
- 9 Niche; business suspension (6)
- 10 Sole (4)
- 12 Actually if unofficially (2,5)
- 14 Arranged in lists (7)
- 15 Bloke; bay (4)
- 17 Shriveled (6)
- 18 Type of hound, rug (6)
- 20 A picture; plaster for it (anag.) (4-8)

DOWN

- 1 Make a fool of (4,3,1,4)
- 2 Attempt; wound with knife (4)
- 3 Archangel; — Oak (Hardy) (7)
- 4 In detached way (mus.) (5)
- 6 Above; finished (4)
- 7 Be very expensive (4,3,5)
- 11 Dismiss as trivial (5,3)
- 13 Fighter (7)
- 16 Roles separate (4)
- 19 Incite (4)

SOLUTION TO NO 1056

ACROSS: 1 Sepulchral 7 Quackle 8 Noddy 10 Also-ran 11 Donor 12 Encode 15 Ignore 17 Ember 18 Radical 21 Locke 22 Ovalion 23 Penitence

DOWN: 1 Swiss 2 Poker 3 Lierre 4 Himgong 5 Antonio 6 Square meal 9 Dajceing 13 Cubicle 14 Darkens 16 Cry off 19 Drama 20 Chide

SOLUTION TO TIMES TWO CROSSWORD 1052

In association with BRITISH MIDLAND

ACROSS: 1 Spiked 5 Beret 8 Pawn 9 Grouping 10 Caustic 11 Silly 13 Die the death 16 Shoal 18 Messiah 21 Trombone 22 Alloy 23 Wessex 24 Typify

DOWN: 2 Placard 3 Kings 4 Dogfight 5 Blot 6 Replica 7 Final 12 Adherent 14 Erasmus 15 Head off 17 Horde 19 Swamp 20 Coax

1st PRIZE of a return ticket travelling economy class to anywhere on BRITISH MIDLAND's domestic or international network is R Whitaker, Bradshaw, Bolton.

2nd PRIZE of a return ticket to anywhere on BRITISH MIDLAND's domestic network is G M Lamb, Bentleyhead.

All flights subject to availability.

Gould accused of racism by Blake after training dispute

By RUSSELL KEMPSON

NATHAN BLAKE, the black Bolton Wanderers striker, has accused Bobby Gould, the Wales manager, of making racist remarks to him. Matters reached a head last week after a training-ground incident and Blake refused to take his place on the substitute bench for the World Cup qualifying match against Belgium at the National Stadium.

Blake, 25, said yesterday that he would not play for Wales again while Gould was manager. "I have a total lack of respect for him," he said. "I went to see him before the game and told him that I did not want to be part of his team."

Gould vehemently denied the claims yesterday. "I am not a racist. I have nothing to hide," he said. Blake's grievance follows a series of alleged incidents, starting six years ago, when Blake played for Cardiff City. He claims that

Gould, who took a training session for Len Ashurst, then Cardiff manager, directed racist comments at him and another black player.

In October last year, Holland beat Wales 3-1 in Cardiff, two of the goals being scored by Pierre van Hooijdonk. Blake claimed that Gould came into the dressing-room and said: "Who was supposed to be marking that black bastard?" Gould said yesterday: "I might have said 'Who should have picked up that big so-and-so?' but there was no racist intent in it."

Blake's discontent split over last week, when Gould was handing out the coloured bibs for training. Gould said: "I gave out the yellow ones, the green, the white, and then I said to Nathan: 'You're in the blacks'. Perhaps I said it with a wry smile, maybe a bit cryptically, but nothing was meant by it."

Blake subsequently complained to Neville Southall, the Wales coach, who brought the matter to Gould's attention. "I called in Nathan straightaway and told him that if I had caused any offence, if I had said something out of place, then I would apologise. And I did," Gould said.

"If my remark was directed at Nathan personally, as an individual, then maybe he could substantiate what he is saying, but it wasn't. My main disappointment was that Nathan didn't come to see me first."

Last night the Football Association of Wales (FAW) promised a full inquiry. Brian Fear, the FAW president, said: "We intend to launch an investigation and talk to the team manager and to the player involved."

Injury robs Britain of Rusedski

BRITAIN'S hopes of reclaiming their place at the high table of world tennis recoiled yesterday. Already short of the services of Tim Henman for the Davis Cup tie against Zimbabwe this weekend, they were further weakened when it was confirmed that Greg Rusedski has not recovered from a wrist injury.

The winners of the Euro-African group one contest at Crystal Palace will advance into the world group, comprising the leading 16 nations, but without Henman, who has had an operation on his elbow, or Rusedski, in the opposition, Byron Black Zimbabwe's world No 46, can look forward to his two singles encounters with some confidence.

David Lloyd, the Britain coach, is left with Andrew Richardson, Mark Petchey, Jamie Delgado and Neil Broad, who is a doubles specialist.

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